

Ken

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THE LATE MUDDIE LEADBETTER



# comment



"Of all the cants which are canted in this canting world, though the cant of hypocrisy may be the worst, the cant of criticism is the most tormenting."

LAURENCE STERNE

ONE ALWAYS feel sympathy for authors who turn on their critics, for anyone who has ever

had a book published has at some time fulminated in private at the ignorance or arrogance of a reviewer. However, experience brings caution, and the honest author will sometimes admit that on occasions his work has been over-praised—what I consider to be the worst book I ever wrote received a number of glowing reviews, though as an edition is still on sale in one European country I am refraining from naming it!

As editor of a magazine in which contributors have never been reluctant to express a low opinion of one another's writings, indeed in one instance the greatest hatchet job on a book that I have read in the British jazz press was undertaken by one contributor at the expense of another, I felt that the rather mild criticisms by Paul Oliver of Mike Leadbitter's and Neil Slaven's *Blues Records 1943-1966* seemed unlikely to provoke any response, but such was far from the case.

In a letter published in the March issue of *Jazz Journal*, Mr. Leadbitter refers to the reviews in both *J.J.* and *J.M.* as 'put-downs', going on to describe some of the difficulties that faced himself and other researchers in the field. He then criticises both reviewers, saying that 'I would like to ask everyone to ignore the words of the two reviewers, both of whom have never attempted a real discography in their lives and are thus not fitted to judge one.' He later adds 'Could someone now review the book - i.e. the content - without trying to cover up their ignorance about most of the artists included by stupid and shallow attacks?'

One fears that a hurt ego is the decisive factor in leading to the above comments by Mr. Leadbitter, for it is surely ironic that a review described as a 'put down' should be used as the basis of a ninety word quote in the March 1969 issue of *Blues Unlimited* intended as a boost to sales of the book. Amongst Paul Oliver's comments, quoted in *Blues Unlimited*, are the words 'All this makes the book of great value to blues enthusiasts and an essential purchase for those who wish to gain more knowledge of the extent of the post-war blues recording scene', and it is a summary with which I would agree, though equally I feel that some of Paul's criticisms are justified. It is a red herring to say that only a discographer can review a discography properly, though I admit that there are certain factors which a non-discographer might overlook, but if I, as a discographer, had reviewed the book instead of Paul Oliver the criticisms would have been along similar lines. The final point in Mr. Leadbitter's letter concerning the ignorance of the reviewers about most of the artists, apart from being highly questionable as an opinion, can also cut two ways, for if the information is so specialised that only Mr. Leadbitter and, presumably, a few others, are in a position to document it, how can the rest of us—discographers or not—know whether or not it is accurate?

**F**URTHER instalments in the saga of Leadbitter vs Critics are tending to take a delightfully surrealistic turn. '... the mass of additions, corrections, etc—I don't expect that many—will be published I hope, in booklet form', thus Mr. Leadbitter in the March 1969 *Blues Unlimited*. 'All the post-war discographies of Blues, R & B and Jazz are so incomplete and full of errors that the whole field will have to be worked over and re-published anyhow. Additions and corrections to Jepsen and Leadbitter would double or treble the volume of their books!' thus Kurt Mohr, a discographer with a specialist interest in the blues field, in the April *Jazz Journal*. One cannot refrain from commenting that 'the mass of additions, corrections, etc. - I don't expect that many' seems somewhat logic defying as a statement, but never mind, logic is not in at the moment. Carrying on the good fight, we find Mr. Leadbitter in the May *Blues Unlimited* taking a leaf from the Liberace 'you people are wunnerful and what the critics says doesn't matter' type of approach, when he writes 'While a few critics rave on, work continues steadily. The important people, the readers, have been really magnificent.' On page 13 of the same issue we read in an advertisement for *Blues Records 1943-1966* the words 'A fantastic volume of several hundred pages listing *every known* (my italics. A.McC.) and including dozens of previously unknown BLUES records of the Postwar era.' Switching to page 30 we find Mr. Leadbitter reporting 'I am tied up because work on a Second Discography is under way! Not Volume 2, which is a silly title, but just another book covering city and jazz-blues.'

**P**ART OF the critical reaction was probably the result of over enthusiastic prior publicity. Being prey to moments of melancholia when I assure contributors and readers who happen to be around that in my opinion *Jazz Monthly* is the worst magazine of its type ever to be printed, I find the self-assertive tone of much of the *Blues Unlimited* publicity grating, much as I admire and enjoy this fine magazine. What is unfortunate is that the discography which, despite imperfections, I regard as a superb work of scholarship for which Mr. Leadbitter legitimately deserves full praise, might now be set up as a definitive model which it is certainly not. By reacting so aggressively to any criticism, even when meant to be constructive, Mr. Leadbitter—incidentally, a writer who has never shown reluctance to express strong opinions on the products of others, as indeed he is legitimately entitled to do—seems to be insulating himself against suggestions that could make any future edition of his book of greater worth. I once knew a theatre critic who became so enraged at the attitudes of the actors and actresses whom he met that he confessed to me that he was seriously toying with the idea of never again speaking to them but merely handing them a card upon which was printed the words 'Darling, You Were Wonderful'. If Mr. Leadbitter continues in his present vein maybe critics should club together in a gesture of mass contrition and visit him with cards in hand.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

## LONDON JAZZ CENTRE

JUNE SEES the completion of the first year of the London Jazz Centre Society, a project aimed at improving the status of the creative jazz musician and of providing the jazz scene with a permanent base free from commercial pressures, on the lines of a combination of Cecil Sharp House, the National Film Theatres, and the I.C.A., with facilities for perfor-

mance, rehearsal tuition, reference libraries of books, scores and records, together with good social facilities. Such a project requires much time and patience to complete the unspectacular organisational stages, to say nothing of finance, but at last we are set up as a company limited by guarantee and have been granted official charity status, so that now all is ready for a major fund raising drive, and all donations, offers of advice, assistance, etc. are very welcome.

Whilst all this has been being attended to the society has undertaken various activities to both sustain interest and to fulfill others of its aims, principally the maintenance of playing opportunities for creative musicians, and the development of public patronage to jazz. A regular Monday night club session has become established at 100 Oxford Street drawing a steady audience of enthusiastic supporters for a broad cross section of the more adventurous groups on today's scene, ranging from Westbrook/Surman and colleagues, McGregor, Tubby Hayes, Sandy Brown, Graham Collier and some blues bands, to providing the first public exposures of several new groups such as the brilliant Keith Tippett group. Throughout the winter we ran a series of concerts at the Conway Hall, which received many complimentary reviews in National newspapers and established an important precedent by receiving financial support from both Camden Council and The Arts Council of Great Britain.

Now comes the vital second year, in which we must strive to consolidate the ground so far gained and to gain fresh support by tapping areas as yet unexplored by the jazz scene. We shall be staging more, and increasingly ambitious concerts; opening more club venues both on our own and in conjunction with other bodies; pressing for a share of the subsidies received by other spheres of the arts; and generally striving to uplift the status of the jazz artists.

Current projects include presenting the premiere of Mike Westbrook's *Metropolis*, a work for 17 piece orchestra, written on an Arts Council Bursary; which we put on at the Mermaid theatre May 18th; Humph returns to the Conway, May 31st, a reunion with Wally Fawkes and Keith Christie. Whilst some late night shows at the National Film theatre are in the planning stage; as is a possible festival of contemporary music in collaboration with the I.C.A. and other organisations.

Thus we are trying to make the opportunities measure up to the high quality of today's performers, who deserve every support that can be given them. Your support can be as simple as just taking out a membership of the LJCS at 30/- a year (10/- for students, please quote union card no.) attending club and concert sessions whenever possible, or if you feel able to offer time and labour as well there are usually plenty of jobs needing assistance.

JOHN TACK

**Birmingham Jazz Record Society:** Meetings every Friday (8.00 p.m.) at COLMORE INN, BARWICK STREET (near the Grand Hotel).

JUNE 6th Chicagoanish - *Pete Rollason*; 13th Flying Visit - *Barry Seager*; 20th "The rough and the smooth" - *Ralph Ponting*; 27th "What do you know-Joe?" - *Margaret Scott*.

JULY 4th. "Satchelmouth" - *Don-Harry-Eric*;

11th Your requests - *Harry Jordan*; 18th Omer Simeon - *Harry Johnson*; 25th Made in Europe No.7 - *Don Rainbow*.

#### **Kingston Jazz Society**

THE Kingston Jazz Society has been in existence for only a few months but in that time has established itself as an enterprising organisation. Record recitals are presented on alternate Tuesday evenings at 'The Outrigger', Thames Side, Kingston-upon-Thames, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Guest recitalists to date have included Graham Collier, John Kendall and Bill Kinnell, while a number of interesting recitals have been presented by members.

In addition, the live jazz scene is supported as far as is possible and members have organised parties to attend a number of concerts. The Society issues an informative news sheet about its own and general jazz activities. and full details may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, John H. Spragg, 10 Drake Court, Cranes Park Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey.

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Barney Kessel is too well-known to require a detailed introduction. Born in Muskogee, Oklahoma on October 17, 1924 he has been active in musical circles since nineteen-forty. An extremely melodic and lyrical improviser, his tastes in jazz are catholic. He has, for example, recorded with both Kid Ory and Charlie Parker and in recent years has visited Europe with George Wein's touring groups. He has now made his home in London and opened at the Scott Club on May 12 with his trio (completed by Jeff Clyne and Tony Oxley). He is due back at the club on June 30, this time to play opposite the classical guitarist John Williams.



Photograph by David Redfern

BARNEY KESSEL TALKING

## BARNEY KESSEL TO ALUN MORGAN

**B**ARNEY KESSEL is, by nature, one of the most likeable and intelligent musicians I have had the pleasure of meeting. I interviewed Barney at Polydor's London headquarters where we were able to play an advance pressing of his latest LP, "Hair Is Beautiful" (Polydor 583 725), recorded here last November

*Barney, the reference books all say you were self-taught. Is this so?*

THAT'S RIGHT. I had this news-paper round at home and when I was thirteen I bought a guitar for a dollar. I saw it in a shop window and liked the look of the instrument. I used to sit at home picking out tunes and trying to find the right chords to go with them. My mother told me I'd better make up my mind and decide if I wanted to play seriously. If not, she said, throw the thing away! But I knew even then that I wanted to be a musician and I also knew that I had to leave home and go to Los Angeles or New York to make it.

*You were, presumably, just too young to have heard Charlie Christian in the flesh.*

NO, THAT'S not so. I not only heard Charlie, I actually played with him, for two days. But he showed me a lot in those two days. I was sixteen at the time and he was a great help. But even then I realised that if I was going to make it, it was no use copying Charlie, much as I admired him. I had to find a way of being myself. This took a few years! Those first records I made under my own name, for the Atomic label with Herbie Steward and Dodo Marmarosa, I still sound like Charlie on *Man I love*, *Slick chick* and so forth. But that's getting a little ahead of the chronology. I left home for Los Angeles and was lucky enough to get a job with a band fronted by Chico Marx. Actually Ben Pollack was the man who ran the band. It was a good band too. It was made up of experienced guys like George Wettling and Marty Marsala and young fellows just starting out, like Marty Napoleon and me. Mel Torme was the vocalist—he was my room-mate—and the arranger was Paul Villepigue. The arrangements were good too. Paul died, tragically,

about twenty years ago incidentally. Chico Marx didn't play much with the band. He just came on to do a few featured spots. After that I was with Charlie Barnet for a while then came Artie Shaw's band.

*What was it like, working with Shaw?*

I LEARNED a lot from being with the band. Some of the guys in the band resented Artie's attitude but you've got to have discipline haven't you? He did everything a leader is supposed to do, stayed sober, got plenty of work and fronted a very musicianly band. It wasn't a rough, exciting band like, say Woody's but it played good music. We had some Buster Harding arrangements and some beautiful Eddie Sauter things. I remember that Eddie's *Summertime* was a gem. But we rehearsed more good arrangements than we ever played on the job, or recorded. Roy Eldridge, Herbie Steward and Dodo Marmarosa were in the band and I was part of the Gramercy Five when we did things like *Scuttlebut* and the *Grabtown grapple*. I was under contract with Shaw for a year, which was kind of unusual. I stayed the year then left to free-lance around Los Angeles.

*When you got to Los Angeles, who were the guitarists around at the time?*

THERE weren't too many. There was Allan Reuss, he was with Benny Goodman, Al Hendrickson, he was in the Coast Guard but he was stationed on the coast so he was still able to sit in. Then there was Dave Barbour, Irving Ashby and George Van Epps. But most of the guitarists around then were just making the change from acoustic to amplified guitar. I've always felt that I had an advantage here because I more or less started out on amplified guitar. I never had to undergo the traumatic experience of the change from acoustic! It's a big step for a guitarist if he's been playing acoustic for years.

*You played on at least one date with Irving Ashby.*

I KNOW what you're going to say! *Five guitars in flight* with Earl Spencer. Yes, we had a whole section of guitars going there, Irving, Arv Garrison, Tony Rizzi, Gene Sargent and myself. That was in the days before bass guitars, of course. It was difficult to avoid the sameness of sound. One of the guys did tune down, if I remember. But it would have been easier with a bass guitar in the section. That was the Arvin Garrison Quintet tacked onto the Spencer band for that one title. Arvin's dead now. He was married to Vivian Garry, the bass player and vocalist. The Spencer band tried to sound like the Kenton band and played a lot of pretty wild things. The other "progressive" band of the day, Boyd Raeburn, was quite different. Boyd's approach was unique. He played pop music as if it had been scored by, say, Stravinsky. Now that was pretty interesting. In fact it's an approach to pop music which has never been exploited since. And those Raeburn records still sound good today. The only thing that dates the good records of that period are the rhythm sections. When I was starting out a drummer once said to me "we're here to keep the brass and the saxes in line, to stop them racing or dragging. It's not our job to play interesting solos. We're the time-keepers". That was the attitude of mind in those days. If you were a guitarist in a rhythm section and you tried to take a solo you were told to keep quiet and play the beat.

*But by 1947 you'd already arrived at a different way of playing rhythm guitar. One of the first occasions I can remember hearing you on record was on Charlie Parker's "Stupendous". You were feeding chords at the most tellingly useful points. Is that the way Bird asked you to play?*

NO, I HAD been playing like that for some time.

It occurred to me one night, at a session, that the pianist's steady four-in-a-bar was crippling my attempts to play in a perfectly natural way, so I broke free from strumming chords in a rigid style. In those days I was still young enough to play all night at jam sessions without feeling the effect the next day! I was playing at a club one night when Bird came by and sat in. After the session he helped me up the stairs with my amplifier and he was saying, "you know, like, man, I mean, you know, like. . ." He went on like that for about ten minutes. I thought he was putting me on until I realised he was trying to tell me that he'd enjoyed my playing. I was flattered, of course. Then about five days later I got a call to make a recording date with Bird. He'd asked for me to be in the band along with Wardell Gray and Howard McGhee. That was the *Relaxin' at Camarillo* session.

*You spent about two years with the Oscar Peterson Trio in the early fifties. How did you enjoy that?*

WELL FIRSTLY, let me say that Oscar and Ray Brown are two of the finest human beings that anyone could wish to be associated with. At every level it was a wonderful relationship. They kept me on my toes whenever we played. It was as if I joined the trio at a time when I was just about capable of driving a sports car at sixty miles per hour, but straight away Ray and Oscar kept pushing that pedal down and I found I was trying to control a car at eighty! We got lots of things going with the trio. I learned to recognise Oscar's signals. If he played, say, a little figure in the treble it meant I could go into a chorus of two-part invention! I never had the least trouble over things like passing chords with Oscar, there were no clashes. But nowadays I like to listen to pianists rather than play with them. There are too many problems when you have two instruments capable of playing chords. And the piano can be such a dominant voice too.

*You've been in Hollywood for a long time. What have you been doing, apart from making those wonderful albums for Lester Koenig?*

THANKS. You're very kind about my Contemporary LPs. Well, I've been involved with nearly every aspect of the musical business. I've been doing a great deal of writing for films and television. I worked as an A. and R. man for Verve Records for a time. I was even on-camera in an early Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis film in one sequence! You name it, I've probably done it. There's an awful lot of money to be made in Hollywood if you're prepared to work. The work and the money have their effect on some people. They may not want to admit it but I know that a lot of them are not happy at the way they live. I've been through the whole scene. I've done the artist-starving-in-the-garret bit and the "God is Mammon" Act. Now I'm just about back where I was. I've turned full circle and I'm playing the kind of music I want to play. I'm being myself and that's important. I love people and I like to play for them.

*Have you any thoughts on the younger musicians of today?*

I THINK it's wonderful that so many young musicians are so well equipped, technically, nowadays. Some of them can fly all over their instruments by the time they are twenty. But I think there's more to it than that. No one can be a good soloist until he's come to terms with himself and with life. You've got to have a philosophy, a balanced outlook based on experience. There are more talented musicians active in our field now than ever before, but I have a theory that the number of really great musicians – and by that I mean guys like Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young – remains the same. At any given time there are still only a handful of giants. Not necessarily the same giants, of course, but never more than a handful. I must give credit to the number of really great bass players around today. One I'd like to mention, because he really heralded a new phase and has never received too much credit, is Ralph Pena. I love a bass player who keeps time and retains the essential character of the instrument. I've played with some bass players who spend a great deal of their time down near the bridge, producing upper register lines which conflict with what I'm trying to do on the guitar. When I ask them to stay in the more orthodox register they say "but if we don't experiment we'll never learn how to do it". I say "go ahead and learn, but not on my date, if you don't mind!" Another thing that baffles me is the way a band can play a two hour concert of originals, sometimes without even announcing the titles of the pieces. The musicians hurl their music at the paying customers in the most unpalatable manner. Then when the public isn't too enthusiastic those same musicians are resentful and talk about "rejection". If they paced the programmes better then the audiences might react more favourably to new works. Anyway, a lot of the so-called "originals" I've heard are not, musically, of much value. Few of them appeal to me as strongly as, say, *I concentrate on you* and even fewer will last as long.

*Apart from the works of writers such as Cole Porter, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, etc. what other songs attract you?*

WELL ALUN, music is a pretty big world. I try not to close my ears to anything. Recently, I've heard various things by Tom Jones that I've enjoyed, and the other night I came across a nice song and a good interpretation. It was Dusty Springfield singing *Windmills of the mind*. And some of the Beatles tunes appeal to me. But I want to keep an open mind. I'm not going to play songs by the Beatles just because it's the thing to do. I'll play the Beatles songs I like. The important point is to listen to everything but to remain yourself. You can learn from almost any musical field but don't let it dominate you. I don't want to become, say, "The King Of Bossa Nova" or "The King Of Polka" or whatever. I want to be Barney Kessel, musician. I've heard that it got so bad a few years ago that if Stan Getz was booked for a job and didn't play bossa novas he didn't get paid. The bookers, the club owners, the audiences, they identified Stan with the bossa nova and that's all they'd let him play. It's different now, of course, but I don't want to undergo that kind of treatment.

*Can we talk about your new Polydor album? How did this come about?*

I CUT IT last November, when I was over here with Jazz Expo. I went to see the show and Alan

Bates gave me the score. I selected ten of the songs and chose the instrumentation. It's one I like working with. There's a rhythm guitar and organ. The organ plays like a sax section, a solid, full sound beneath and behind the guitar. There's some fine songs from the show.

*You've altered the treatment in places. This one we're hearing now, "Ain't got no", you've doubled the tempo from the original haven't you?*

I THINK it lends itself to jazz more this way. I'm not "selling out" with this album. Listen.

When the guitar comes on there, after the theme statement, that's me playing jazz. I'm not diluting the way I usually play. And I think I'll get through to a lot of people with the tunes from a good show. Let's face it, this is a better commercial proposition than, say, "Barney Kessel Plays Ham Hawes" but my point is that I play the way I always play on this LP. Well, that's not quite true. I think I play better! I'm very pleased with the album

*How much of it was scored? In the coda of "Frank Mills", for example, the group goes into a beautiful vamp which sounds almost too good to be true.*

THAT WAS spontaneous. It happened quite a bit and I was very pleased at the way we got those ten tunes down before I flew home last year.

*What are your plans for the future?*

I'M LIVING here now. London is my base of operations. I like the tempo of life and I'm learning the language fast. I'd like to do more records, play the jazz clubs, possibly do some writing for films and television and appear at the various jazz festivals here and on the Continent. Anyway, I'm booked up until November. After that I shall let things take their course. I'm sure it will work out alright!

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# LESSER KNOWN BANDS OF THE FORTIES / JIM BURNS

## NO.10: COUNT BASIE

"FIRST INDICATIONS that the big boom might be over began to appear in the early summer of 1946. Attendance figures started to decline in ballrooms, and on one night bookings. Much of the money supporting these operations had come from defence industries which were now being cut back. The mood of the spenders also underwent a change. A lot of people who had seen no reason not to spend with reckless abandon during the war now got serious about buying homes, appliances, etc, as the relaxing of material restrictions began to make these available".

"Many ballrooms which had been operating on a full six-night week reduced to only four or five, and some opened only on weekends. Hotels and nightclubs underwent policy changes. Many promoters of one-nighters suspended operations completely, usually after a series of unprofitable dates on which they experienced difficulty in even taking in enough money to pay the band's guarantee".

The two paragraphs above (from Leo Walker's *The Wonderful Era Of The Great Dance Bands*) give a reasonable picture of the economic factors affecting the big-band scene in the middle-1940s.

Naturally—as Walker goes on to point out—bandleaders began to look around for ways to attract the audiences again, and also to reduce costs. Orchestras were disbanded and then re-organised on a smaller scale, with some of the musicians rehired at lower salaries; various novelty effects were tried; and musical policies often underwent drastic changes (in general there was a swing towards sweet, danceable music). These comments apply mainly to the more-commercial bands, of course, but the jazz-oriented units must have been affected too. As Walker says, "During the war years the emphasis had drifted further and further towards music for listening", and although "The Negro leaders resisted more stubbornly the temptation to reduce manpower or to make alterations in style" some changes can be seen from the recorded evidence alone.

Count Basie continued his early-1940s musical style well into 1946, although a certain slight movement towards a bop-influenced approach can be detected on sides such as *Rambo*, *Stay Cool*, *The King* and *Mutton Leg*; possibly it is the soloists—J.J. Johnson in particular—who are the cause of this, but one feels that the tone of these items is subtly different, rather as if outside factors were affecting musical values. With the switch (in early-1947) to recording for RCA-Victor a more definite change became apparent, both in the basic material and the way in which it was handled.

It's perhaps significant that Ann Moore's stylised blues vocal on *Me And The Blues* is given such prominence. During the hey-day of the big-bands the vocalists were invariably allocated a single chorus, and the accent was clearly on the band. In this case, however, the Basie band is relegated to a supporting role; I doubt whether anyone, other than an avid fan, could even tell that it is Basie. The performance is routine, and apart from some bright work from the trumpets has little to recommend it. *Brand New Wagon* is better,

mainly because Jimmy Rushing is the vocalist and the band seems to settle into the old, rocking Basie groove. The strong trumpet section is again prominent. These two tracks were both from Basie's first session for Victor—in January 1947—and were hardly likely to inspire confidence in the band's future. It is not that the musicianship is any worse than previously, but rather that the vital spark seems to be missing.

SOME OF THE most interesting—from a jazz point of view—of Basie's discs during this period were made with small-groups drawn from the band. Eight sides were cut during May 1947, and although this isn't the place to discuss them in any detail it is worth recommending the excellent solos produced by Emmett Barry and Paul Gonsalves on *Swingin' The Blues* and *Backstage at Stuff's*. Both are ideally suited to this kind of relaxed performance.

May was a busy month for Basie, with the band itself recording six tracks. *The Jungle King* is a novelty song, pure and simple, but is handled in such an engaging manner by Rushing and the band that it's difficult not to like it. It has something of the gay air of Basie's 1938 recordings of *Stop Beating Around The Mulberry Bush* and *Mama Don't Want No Peas An' Rice An' Coconut Oil*. What appears to be a concession to the element in the audiences more interested in dancing is heard on *South*, with its clipped phrasing from the trumpets, and its un-Basie like rhythm. There is a brief solo by Paul Gonsalves, and the ensemble blasts away for a time, but on the whole the performance sounds uneasy, and one feels that it isn't particularly good big-band music, let alone good Basie. Of far more value is *House Rent Boogie* which kicks off with some first-rate stride-piano from Basie leading into a theme statement by the trumpet-section playing muted; the bop influence is discernible in their phrasing and crisp sound. The whole performance is similar to earlier Basie discs such as *Red Bank Boogie*, *The Mad Boogie*, *Wild Bill's Boogie* (listen to the same muted trumpet sound on this), and *Hob Nail Boogie*, all of which spotlight Basie's piano work.

With the 1948 AFM recording-ban looming ahead the activity in the studios quickened towards the end of 1947 as the companies stocked up on items for future release. Basie recorded four sides in October. *Blues And Sentimental* featured vocalist Bob Bailey (collectors of curiosa might like to note that Bailey recorded *Danny Boy* with the Basie band in 1946, the result being one of those discs which has a kind of horrible fascination; Dizzy Gillespie's mid-1950s version of *Over The Rainbow*, with Austin Cromer warbling away, might safely be put in the same class). On *Don't You Want A Man Like Me*, however, Jimmy Rushing shows how more interesting his vocal style is, and although the lyrics of the song are not amongst the best in this line he manages to put them across in a convincing manner. The band plays some full-blooded fill-ins as Rushing sings, and the bop influence is again noticeable in the phrases used by the saxophone and trumpet sections. The two instrumentals—*Seventh Avenue Express* and *Mister Roberts' Roost*—are exciting enough, and



Photograph by David Redfern

Buddy Tate, Dickie Wells, and one of the trumpeters (Harry Edison?) can be heard soloing on the former. *Mister Roberts' Roost* is taken at a more relaxed tempo, and Basie is the only soloist. Although both tracks are well-played, and certainly of above-average interest to anyone researching into the late-1940s scene, it is true, I think, that they lack character; it's difficult to define just what it is that is missing, but somehow the overall sound is different to that expected from a Basie band. During December 1947 the band recorded quite a few sides, the majority of which featured Rushing. *Money Is Honey* (inspired I suppose, by T.E. Brown's "Money is honey, my little sonny/And a rich man's joke is always funny") owes its success to the bright lyrics of the song ("Money is honey, where can my honey be?/If I had my money, my honey would be here with me"), and Rushing's handling of them. The rich sound produced by the trombones stands out, and there are neat, if brief, solos from trumpet and tenor. *Hey, Pretty Baby* and *Bye bye blues* also find Rushing in good form, and on the latter there is some scoring for the trombones behind Buddy Tate's solo which has the curious effect of seeming to slow the rhythm down, although in actual fact the rhythm-section itself maintains the same tempo. Of the instrumentals the oddest is perhaps *Sophisticated Swing*. This takes us almost into the world of Charlie Spivak, Les Brown, and the more-commercial side of Tommy Dorsey, I don't mean this in

any derogatory (to those three leaders) sense, because personally I enjoyed much of the music they produced, but one would normally expect a more jazz-influenced performance from Basie, with originality as its keynote. As it is Les Brown's version of this tune is better than Basie's. Curiously enough there are some similarities between these two records; I'd guess that Brown was copied by Basie, rather than the other way round. It would be interesting to hear the comments of someone who heard both bands during this period—the comparing of the dates of the two recordings would not necessarily prove anything conclusive—to see if Basie veered towards the style usually associated with Brown, or whether Brown changed direction to follow a lead set by Basie. On record there is at least one other example of Basie playing in the Brown manner, but it isn't fair to take this scanty evidence as being indicative of a major change in the band's policy.

IT WAS April 1949 before Basie set foot in the recording-studio again, and one of the first sides cut was a version of *Cheek To Cheek* which is clearly cast in the Les Brown mould. I'd go so far as to say that most people, if given this disc in a blindfold test, would guess at it being by Brown; it is arranged in the style Brown used for his versions of *Taking A Chance On Love* and *I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm* and even the soloists (with the exception of Dickie Wells, perhaps) would have had no difficulty in fitting into the Brown set-up. Was Basie playing this kind of music regularly throughout 1948/49, or were the two sides I've discussed made under pressure from the recording company? The lack of records from 1948, and the almost complete non-existence of written material about the band in this period (even Raymond Horricks's *Count Basie and his Orchestra* ignores the subject, and G.E. Lambert's *Count Basie — The Middle Years* in *Jazz Monthly*, September 1963, covers only up to 1946, or so) make it almost impossible to ascertain just what Basie was up to. Perhaps some interested American reader can supply the answer?

*Shoutin' Blues*, from a June 1949 date, has a boppish theme and some punchy work by the brass. Apart from that it's mainly a feature for Basie, and although the side moves well it doesn't ever rise to any great heights. Jimmy Rushing's slow-tempo rendition of *After You've Gone* is pleasant, and he handles *Walking Slow Behind You*, one of the band's last records, in his usual assured manner. As an example of how the band's standing had fallen in the jazz-world it's worthwhile quoting Billie Holiday's comments (from a Blindfold Test in the February 1950 issue of *Metronome*) on this side, "That's Jimmy Rushing . . . he never killed me . . . it's Basie's band, and the tenor sounds a little like Lucky Thompson. This is just fair, very fair . . . tell the truth I'm ashamed of them. That band—I could just cry for what's happened to it, when I think how great it used to be". Lady Day was mistaken in naming the tenorman as Lucky Thompson, because the discographies show



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that the tenor-chairs were then held by Paul Gonsalves and Bill "Weasal" Parker. Normally, Gonsalves took the solos, but it doesn't sound like him on this record—unless he had temporarily changed his style—and one can only presume that it is Parker.

Basie's final session for Victor took place in February 1950, but by this time he had disbanded his large unit and was working with an octet (see "The Count Basie Octet" by Dave Gelly in *Jazz Monthly*, July 1963, for detailed information on this particular period in Basie's career). It was to be 1952 before he began recording for Norman Granz and so started his climb back towards the top of the big-band league, but in April 1951 he did record four tracks which are perhaps better discussed with the late-1940s material. I'm not sure if this band was a touring unit, or formed purely for the session, but it achieved a healthy sound, and in Wardell Gray it had one of the finest modern tenormen. Gray can be heard on *Nails*, a track which also spotlights some neat unison trumpet work and the kicking drum style of Gus Johnson, but it is *Little Pony* which provides the best opportunity to listen to the tenorman's smooth lines. This Neal Hefti number was devised as a feature for Gray, and in fact depends on him for its impact; had a less-interesting soloist been involved the whole thing would have evolved into just another big-band record, but as it was it became one of the better discs of the early-1950s. *Howzit* is the band and Basie all the way, and *Beaver Junction* has the bop-flavoured unison trumpets again, and a brief solo by Clark Terry. The rhythm-section functions in an extremely efficient manner on all four tracks, and if, with the exception of *Little Pony*, none of them are of any special importance then they are least entertaining to listen to. They are not, perhaps, "typical" Basie as it was known in the early-1940s, or in the middle and late-1950s, but as examples of thoroughly good big-band music they are difficult to fault.

IT CAN'T BE denied that the period covered in this article was not a very successful (in the sense of achieving anything of great value) one for the band. But the recorded evidence does show it as being capable of playing decent music when it had the right basic material, and if one occasionally feels that the attempts to find a new style resulted in oddities — *Cheek to Cheek* and *Sophisticated Swing*—or in a general lack of character, then it should be remembered that Basie was not alone in this; quite a few leaders were faced with problems of one kind or another during the late-1940s, and not all of them managed to hang on as long as Basie did; nor did they prove their resilience by making a come-back in the 1950s. The sides recorded for Victor may not be too important, but they do have value as documents of a time when the big-band scene, popular music, and jazz too for that matter, were all going through a transitional process.

### RECORDS:

THE BASIE Victor tracks can all be found on Camden CDN 120 and Camden CDN 145. The 1945/46 sides for Columbia have appeared on various LPs and EPs in the past few years, and collectors would be well advised to study a Basie discography to avoid duplications. *Stop Beating Around the Mulberry Bush* and *Mama Don't Want No Peas An' Rice An' Coconut Oil* are on Ace Of Hearts AH 119. The four 1951 tracks have, like the 1945/46 material, appeared on several LPs and EPs, and again it is best to refer to a good discography. Dizzy Gillespie's *Over The Rainbow* is on Columbia SEB 10096, and Les Brown's *Sophisticated Swing*, *Taking a Chance on Love*, and *I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm* are all available on American Harmony HL 7100.

# LEADBELLY'S LAST SESSIONS / EDDIE LAMBERT



Photographs of "Leadbelly" and his guitar, at a Standard Oil Company of California educational broadcast, by courtesy of Charles Payne Rogers.

**I**N HIS PERCEPTIVE piece on Leadbelly in the recent *Jazz on Record* book Paul Oliver describes the singer's repertoire as "of the 'songster' generation which preceded blues . . .". One wonders if this description is quite accurate, for many of the country blues singers who have recorded in non-commercial circumstances reveal a repertoire well beyond the limitations suggested by their race list output. This applies as much to popular recording artists like Blind Willie McTell as it does to those more obscure, perhaps less professional, figures who were unknown until the recent flood of location recordings. Specialisation in blues seems to be a largely urban development and this throws doubt on the existence of a generation of specialist rural blues singers. What seems to have happened is that the blues became an increasingly dominant part of the repertoire of secular Negro singers during the period documented by records and that in urban situations this became almost exclusive. Of course one is on dubious ground anyway when one claims that an individualist like Huddie Leadbetter is representative of anything. In repertoire he seems unique in American Negro music, and the range of his art makes him particularly adept at the artist's knack of being all things to all men. In the course of the *Leadbelly's Last Sessions* set he observed that when he first came to New York in 1934 he was referred to in the press as "The Sweet Singer from the Swamplands", which by any token is a bizarre description of Huddie.

Certainly by the evidence of his vast output on disc such a reference seems grossly misleading. Yet on the *Last Sessions* set he mentions the fact in his preamble to *Springtime in the Rockies*, of all things! One rather doubts if he performed such numbers as this, or *Dancing with tears in my eyes* and *I'm alone because I love you* which also appear here, professionally. On his previous recordings Leadbetter had performed a wide range of songs but the four *Last Sessions* LPs offer an even greater variety and an even greater insight into the work of this unique artist. This is just one of the many reasons why the current availability of the set in this country is to be welcomed. Recorded just over a year before the death of the singer, the *Leadbelly's Last Sessions* LPs are a unique document of this remarkable singer. They contain a vast reservoir of songs, many previously unrecorded by Huddie, and we find the singer relaxed among friends, introducing some of the numbers with extensive background details and anecdotes. There are 94 titles (some of the songs appear twice) covering four generously timed LPs, with some of the sides running for over 30 minutes. Huddie's programme covers field hollers, country dance tunes, a 'Dog Latin' (i.e. racial code) song, blues of both rural and urban derivation, ballads, rural folk songs, protest songs, spirituals work songs, children's songs, army songs, popular commercial ballads, a guitar rag, prison songs and a selec-



tion of Leadbelly's own original numbers. So far as recorded evidence goes Leadbelly was not representative of Negro country singers in his use of so many white folk songs, although the presence of so many white ballad elements in American Negro song makes one wonder if records give a true picture of this particular situation. Neither the race list companies nor the later day blues collectors would have much use for white songs sung by Negroes. Another factor with Leadbelly is that strength of musical character which enables him to make the most unlikely songs entirely his own. He had his own way with blues, of course, and the few sessions he recorded for the race lists are of great interest and value. In particular the issued recordings from his sessions for the Melotone label are particularly fine and one wishes that a complete set of material from this source could be made available. The pattern of assimilation into the Leadbelly cannon seems to have varied with each song. He drew his material from a wide variety of sources including white folk singers, gramophone records and the radio. For example there are some blues on these LPs which have obviously been learned from record. *Backwater blues*, a successful if not outstanding adaptation, derives obviously from the Bessie Smith recording, as does the less convincing *Nobody knows you when you're down and out*. The version of *In the evening* bears a strong resemblance to the Big Bill Broonzy version, indeed it sounds a carbon copy. Yet the fact is that Broonzy did not record this song until 1951. In the very casual circumstances of the first evening Huddie embarks upon a number of songs which he recalled less than perfectly, including the song made popular by Burl Ives, *Blue tail fly*. This would again seem to come direct from Ives and shows the very wide range of derivation of Leadbetter's material.



Huddie Leadbetter's life was complex and varied, his personality no less so. Convicted of murder in his youth and of attempted murder in later life, he was an obvious tear-away and John A. Lomax has related how the singer would sometimes clinch an argument by drawing his knife. But he was also a very adaptable man and the mellow charm of his conversation as captured on these records was reported by the Lomax's many years before. His great talent must have been backed up by a singularly ingratiating personality for him to have sung his way to a pardon on two occasions. His talking and general behaviour on the *Last Sessions* discs are fascinating. At one point during the first evening his wife Martha sets off on a solo version of a spiritual, *I'm thinking of a friend*, only to be brought to a halt by Huddie's constant barrage of prompting and comment. In the argument which ensues he is quite obviously incapable of seeing how distracting his talking was, although as a dissertation on the art of singing by Leadbelly this family squabble is most enlightening. The long monologue on direction in life which precedes Huddie's blues song *Relax your mind* is also fascinating, although not without its ironies coming from a man with Leadbelly's history.

Despite his borrowings from many sources, probably including some not known to the present day listener, Leadbelly was one of the great originals of the music. At the present time his appeal seems suspended between the folk music audience on the one hand and the blues collectors on the other. His songs are used in the folk clubs, but a singer of Huddie's smouldering personality and high voltage emotional communication could have little appeal to the glee club/girl guides sing song audience found in most folk clubs. His eclecticism has little appeal to a blues collector of a 'purist' bent, while in the high-church school of blues as super-pop Leadbelly is quite out of place. There is no trace of 'pop' in Huddie's blues and among the gems of the *Last Sessions* is a fine version of

*National defense blues*, a Leadbelly original on the social effects of women working for high wages during the Second World War. In attitude and in subject matter this is typical of the blues, and the performance (with a very fine guitar part) is of a kind which the race list collector would find wholly acceptable. He also performs the blues song *How come you do me like you do do do* in a manner which seems to re-transform the material back into its primal state before the formalisation of Tin Pan Alley packaging. The qualities in Leadbelly's singing which makes such a transformation possible are the 'earthy' quality of his singing and the absolute absorption of the singer with his material. He really lives every song and while this can make some of his sentimental songs a shade embarrassing it serves to illumine any song he sings with a quality of real life. Huddie's publicity usually included the phrase "King of the World's Twelve String Guitar Players", although in fact as a guitarist he presents an enigmatic figure. At times his playing is of the utmost brilliance, yet at others his phrasing is square and his rhythm uncertain. His habit of speeding-up some of his songs is obviously deliberate, but on occasion his tempo becomes uncertain owing to an inability to play the phrases in time. There are no instances here quite so obvious as the Spanish bass figures on the Capitol *Sweet Mary blues*, but the guitar part varies from a stumbling competence to the brilliance of such performances as *Salty dog*, *Easy Mr Tom* and above all the first version of *Cry for me (Fannin' Street)* in which the guitar playing is of a virtuoso quality.

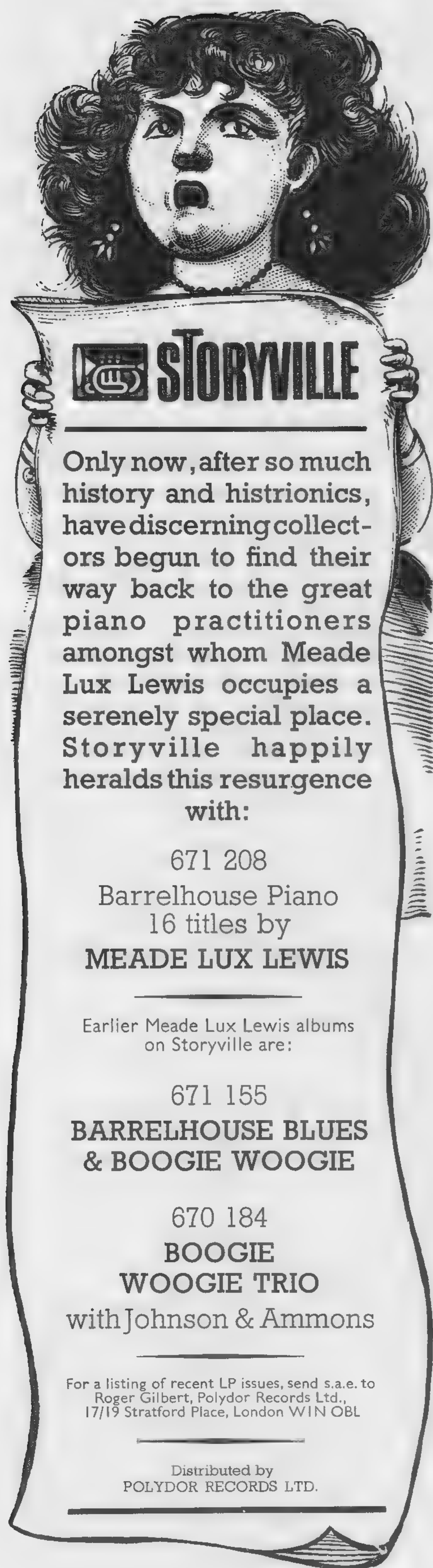
The *Last Sessions* took place over three evenings in the home of Frederic Ramsey Jr; more sessions were planned but never took place. The first evening was intended as a discussion and ideas session and Leadbelly did not bring his guitar. But he became enthusiastic about Ramsey's project of taping his entire repertoire in informal circumstances and at once commenced to pour out a flood of unaccompanied song. There is a superb version of *Go down, Old Hannah* here which is one of the finest things Leadbelly ever recorded. As on some other songs on these LPs the quality of Huddie's voice is affected by age and/or ill health, but the beauty of the performance in both musical and expressive terms, far outweighs the occasional vocal flaw. As the session goes on the singing improves considerably and there are fine versions of *Bring me a little water*, *Silvy*, *Stewball* (both sung as duets with Martha) and *Ain't it a shame to go fishing on a Sunday* among the 34 items recorded at this session. There is also the first of two versions of the fine anti-segregation song *We're in the same boat brother*. Selections 35 to 74 were recorded on the second evening and this massive block of material contains some of Leadbelly's finest recordings. *Salty dog*, *National defense blues* and *Easy Mr Tom* have already been mentioned. *How come you do me* and the wonderful first version of *Cry for me (Fannin' Street)* also come from this session as do the fine recordings of three Leadbelly standards, *The gray goose*, *Mary don't you weep* and *Old Riley*. *The Titanic* is a version of a song which was widespread in American folk song circles, but which is taken over completely by Leadbelly and transformed into a fierce anti-discrimination tale. Of equal stature is the fine *Boll Weevil blues*, a totally different song to the one Huddie had recorded previously under this title. The earthiness of Leadbelly's singing keeps his music in touch with the most basic kind of artistic reality. The singer's involvement gives to folk themes such as the *Titanic* disaster and the boll weevil plague a sense of immediacy even to the listener of twenty year old recordings. The singer's humour, his understanding of the world in which his songs were created, and his intensity bring to them an imaginative and expressive richness of rare directness. This music

points vividly to the fact that Leadbelly was a giant in a way which cuts across the boundaries of current ideas of blues and folk music. A music less sectarian in appeal would be hard to imagine.

IT COULD be said that pre-pop blues and pre-bop jazz are the least affected, the least academic of all twentieth century arts. They were created by a people divorced from the mores of 'art' and 'entertainment' music on ground of segregation. Their music's much vaunted 'purity' seems to have derived from the social facts of their being no Negro audience strong enough to attract the standardisers, although the race list blues provide a partial exception to this, or a large Negro audience who had been through the academic education machine. American Negro music thrived on its own terms without very much outside interference. In the jazz world a few artists became successful in the white show business world during the 'twenties and 'thirties (e.g. Waller and Ellington), but on the whole the language and the directness of jazz remained on a par with that of the blues. The unity of American Negro music is well illustrated in the fact that in terms of melody and rhythm there is a good deal a jazz enthusiast can learn from these *Leadbelly's Last Sessions* LPs. It is beyond question that the social circumstances which dictated the course of blues and jazz up to the end of the second world war were deplorable. It is also true that these circumstances limited the kind of refinement and elaboration encouraged in European music initially by the more enlightened of the aristocracy and latterly by the academics. Within these circumstances a music of remarkable strength, of direct expressiveness, of immense spirit and of unclouded perspective was forged. The world view of this music is different not only from other twentieth century music but also from any other art in the annals of history. For this is a music which reflects a world not of the academic or the aristocrat, not of the aesthete or the mass-oriented popular artist, but of working men and women in rural and urban situations close to the reality of the majority of men and women in Western society today. This does not make the music a superior one in itself, but it certainly is the reason for its unique qualities. Of the great figures nurtured in this art, from Blind Lemon to Bird, so to speak, Huddie Leadbetter is one of the foremost. His output in terms of quality places him on a par with such jazz musicians as Bechet or Morton, with such blues singers as Bessie Smith or Leroy Carr. In the sweeping panorama of the Leadbelly discography these *Last Sessions* recordings hold an important place. They are comparable with Morton's Library of Congress recordings, except that in that instance the music was mixed with autobiography and reminiscence. The Leadbelly sessions concentrate on the music and the chat is incidental, if often illuminating. There are really no other records on which an artist of this stature has been recorded at such length, and the Leadbelly LPs tell one a good deal about American Negro music as a whole as well as about the work of this particular artist. The *Leadbelly's Last Sessions* albums are for these reasons, and above all for the high intrinsic value of the music they contain, among the most important recordings in the American Negro tradition.

## THE RECORDS

*Leadbelly's Last Sessions* are currently distributed by Transatlantic Records, 120/122, Marylebone Lane, London, W.1. The four LPs are issued as two boxed sets, Volume One Folkways FP2941 (two discs) containing selections 1 to 52, Volume Two Folkways FP2942 (two discs) containing selections 53 to 94.



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**THE ERSKINE HAWKINS ORCHESTRA:** Left to right (behind): Trumpets: Sammy Lowe, Marcellus Green, Dud Bascomb; Trombones: Edward Sims, Bob Range. (front): Erskine Hawkins (tp); Saxophones: Julian Dash, Bill Johnson, Jimmy Mitchell, Heywood Henry; Piano: Avery Parrish; Guitarist: Bill McLemore (he is playing alto on this photo - extreme left of saxes); Bass: Lee Stanfield; Drums: James Morrisson.

## ERSKINE HAWKINS AND HIS ORCHESTRA / IAN CROSBIE

**T**HIS WAS probably the most underrated of the great coloured bands of the Swing Era, being completely overshadowed by Duke Ellington, Count Basie and Jimmie Lunceford. The band cut many fine records for Vocalion from 1936 to 1938 and for Bluebird from 1938 to 1950, very few of which were issued in the U.K.

Erskine Ramsay Hawkins was born in Birmingham, Alabama on July 26th, 1914. He attended Alabama State Teachers' College where he started a band in 1934. Two years later the band – known as the 'Bama State Collegians – took a bust to New York City to seek fame and fortune at the Apollo Theatre and Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. Unlike many of its contemporaries the band kept a remarkably stable personnel during the 'thirties and 'forties; the leader played his flashy, often stratospheric trumpet which earned him the 'title' of 'Twentieth Century Gabriel' from the announcer at the Savoy, and – according to Stanley Dance – the nickname 'Irksome' from American record critics. The other trumpet soloists were Wilbur 'Dud' Bascomb and Marcellus Green, the latter killed in a band-bus crash in August 1942. The fourth trumpet player, Sammy Lowe, was the group's chief arranger who contributed many originals to the book.

The reed section showcased a fine brace of tenormen, Paul Bascomb – Dud's older brother – and Julian Dash, whose contrasting styles recalled the Lester Young - Hershal Evans duo with Count Basie. Bascomb preferred the lighter, alto-like, tone and longer lines, while Dash's voice was deeper, more incisive, from the Evans - Chu Berry school. Lead alto Bill Johnson, who also arranged, was cast in the melodic Benny Carter - Hilton Jefferson mould, while his 1944 replacement, Bobby Smith, followed the more buoyant, bouncy style of the other, better known Smiths, Willie and Tab. Second alto, Jimmy Mitchell, was also the band's vocalist. Anchor-man, baritone saxist Heywood Henry, played few solos on this instrument but was featured on clarinet, very often riding high above the ensemble – New Orleans fashion – in the manner of Barney Bigard, his idol, with the Ellington orchestra.

The trombone team of Bob Range and Edward Simms rarely soloed except for an occasional 'wa-wa' bit from Range, however later additions Dickie Harris and Matthew Gee were featured more fre-

quently. The rhythm section was a solid quartet giving the band tremendous lift and drive very much in the Lunceford manner. Pianist Avery Parrish, another arranger, was the most featured soloist next to Hawkins himself, and was at his best in the many slow blues performances by the band. When ill-health compelled him to retire in 1943 he was replaced by Ace Harris whose style, either by accident or design, was very similar to that of his predecessor. Guitarist Bill McLemore, who doubled on alto sax, played an occasional solo on amplified guitar, but mainly stuck to rhythm guitar. Bassist Lee Stanfield provided a solid, always reliable, beat, and was the one constant factor in the section during the band's lifetime. He still plays with Hawkins's small group today. Drummer Jones 'Jack' Morrison believed that his role was that of timekeeper with no exhibitionistic demonstrations of technique – a Jimmy Crawford rather than a Krupa.

**T**HREE YEARS after arriving in New York, an unknown band from the Deep South, they had become a fixture at the Savoy, had been rechristened 'Erskine Hawkins and His Orchestra', and had a recording contract with RCA Victor, the discs being issued on Bluebird, RCA's cheap label. Two bands always provided continuous music for dancing at the Savoy, alternating forty minutes sets on the rotating bandstand, and finishing each set with a few bars of riffing known as a 'chaser'. Hawkins, Bill Johnson and Julian Dash expanded their 'chaser' into a complete 32 measure theme and entitled it *Tuxedo Junction* after a famous road intersection in their hometown of Birmingham, Alabama. The tune was recorded on July 18th, 1939, and within a few weeks of its release the record was being played on thousands of jukeboxes in America. It was their first big hit; but not in this country. Here the tune was a hit all right but the version was Glenn Miller's recorded for the same label eight months later. Another band to cash in with a 'cover' version was Jan Savitt's and this was soon followed by Gene Krupa's recording; both were issued over here. No further comment seems necessary.

*Tuxedo Junction* was followed by other hit records including *After Hours*, *Junction Blues* and *Tippin' In*, and throughout the

'forties the band continued to enjoy popularity, most notably among the Harlem jitterbugs and Lindy-hoppers. With the ending of World War II the big band era was on the wane but Hawkins kept going albeit with changing personnel; Bobby Johnson was now sharing trumpet solos with the leader; Booty Wood (from Lionel Hampton) and Ted Donnelly (ex Andy Kirk) came in on trombone; Joe Murphy, Ed McConney and Sonny Payne were successive drummers; and in 1950 the band changed its recording company and joined Coral, a Decca subsidiary, but its output was much reduced.

By the mid 1950's the economics of running a big band finally proved too much for Hawkins, increasing salaries of sidemen and decreasing bookings forced him to cut to eight pieces, then to six, and most recently he has appeared with a quartet.

## RECORDS AVAILABLE

**I Erskine Hawkins and his Orchestra (1938-41)** Treasury of Jazz No.70. French RCA Victor 430.726

- (a) Erskine Hawkins, Dud Bascombe, Marcellus Green, Sammy Lowe (trumpets); Bob Range, Edward Sims (trombone); Bill Johnson, Jimmy Michelle (altos); Julian Dash (tenor); Heywood Henry (baritone); Avery Parrish (piano); Bill McLemore (guitar/alto); Lee Stanfield (bass); Jack Morrison (drums)
- (b) Skeeter Best replaces McLemore
- (c) James Harris replaces Bascomb; Paul Bascomb (tenor) added
- (d) Paul Bascomb added
- (e) Dickie Harris (trombone) added; Paul Bascomb added

		Recorded NYC	
<i>Rockin' Rollers' Jubilee</i>	(026855-1)	12th September 1938	(a)
<i>Miss Hallelujah Brown</i>	(026858-1)	" " "	(a)
<i>Swingin' on Lennox Ave.</i>	(036946-1)	14th May 1939	(a)
<i>Hot Platter</i>	(038418-1)	18th July 1939	(a)
<i>Wedding Blues</i>	(038422-1)	" " "	(a)
<i>Baltimore Bounce</i>	(045785-1)	20th December 1939	(b)
<i>Dolomite</i>	(047277-2)	27th February 1940	(a)
<i>Gabriel Meets The Duke</i>	(047280-1)	" " "	(a)
<i>Midnight Stroll</i>	(047278-1)	26th April 1940	(a)
<i>Junction Blues</i>	(051260-1)	10th June 1940	(c)
<i>Soft Winds</i>	(057364-1)	6th November 1940	(d)
<i>Nona</i>	(057365-1)	" " "	(d)
<i>No Use Squawkin'</i>	(060405-1)	22nd January 1941	(e)
<i>Blue Sea</i>	(065729-1)	15th May 1941	(e)

**T**HIS IS AN excellent LP with a truly representative selection of tracks arranged and presented in chronological order. A vote of thanks from all jazz collectors is due to Bert Bradfield; would that his example were followed by more American and British counterparts! Space will not allow discussion of each track but a few words are in order about the highlights. *Junction Blues*, a Sammy Lowe original, is an unusual arrangement by Avery Parrish. Bill McLemore's electric guitar introduction with alto sax obligato from Bill Johnson leads into a haunting blues chant from the brass, followed by Marcellus Green's muted trumpet solo. A boogie riff from the saxes with Heywood Henry's clarinet on top and Jack Morrison's driving off-beat cymbal support brings the piece to a rousing finale before reverting to McLemore's closing reprise.....*Swingin' On Lennox Avenue* opens with a medium bounce riff shared between brass and reeds. Solos are provided by Dud Bascomb—very controlled - Bill Johnson—somewhat lugubrious -

and rolling tenor from Julian Dash. A brief Basieish interlude by Parrish previews the closing ensemble high-noted by the Hawkins horn.....Avery Parrish's fast boogie introduction on *Gabriel Meets The Duke* makes way for Hawkins's low-register chorus followed by Henry's clarinet and driving Dash tenor over muted brass riffs; more muted Hawkins is followed by a brief conversation between Bob Range's wa-wa trombone and Bill Johnson's alto with the brass building behind to the final boogie fade-out . . . . *Nona*, a delightful little piece created by Sammy Lowe, once more utilises the McLemore guitar introduction in medium blues tempo followed by a short ensemble bit and a long lazy, very Lesterish, tenor solo by Paul Bascomb, with Stanfield's bass very prominent in the closing riffs . . . . *Soft Winds* is one of the numbers made famous by the Benny Goodman Sextet—here the theme is handled by saxes and trombones with McLemore providing the Charlie Christian asides. A romping Dash tenor solo is followed by Dud Bascomb in Eldridge vein, more Bigardian clarinet, and finally Hawkins shrieking over the closing riffs.

**II After Hours** Erskine Hawkins And His Orchestra. American RCA Victor LPM 2227

- (f) Erskine Hawkins, Bobby Johnson, Chuck Jones, Bill Moore, Sam Lowe (trumpets); Don Coles, Dave James, Norman Green, Ed Sims (trombones); Bobby Smith, Jimmy Michelle (altos); Julian Dash, Aaron Maxwell (tenors); Heywood Henry (baritone); Ace Harris (piano); Leroy Kirkland (guitar); Lee Stanfield (bass); Kelly Martin (drums)
- (g) James Harris (trumpet) added, Ray Hogan and Dan Logan (trombones) replace Coles and Green

		Recorded NYC	
<i>Tippin' In</i>	(D5AB300)	10th January 1945	(f)
<i>After Hours</i>	(051264-1)	10th June 1940	(c)
<i>Cherry</i>	(038420-1)	18th July 1939	(a)
<i>Blackout</i>	(065728-1)	15th May 1941	(e)
<i>Fine And Mellow</i>	(045786-1)	20th December 1939	(b)
<i>Bear Mash Blues</i>	(075527-1)	29th June 1942	(e)
<i>Tuxedo Junction</i>	(038421-1)	18th July 1939	(a)
<i>I've Got A Right To Cry</i>	(D6VB1774)	9th May 1946	(g)
<i>Sweet Georgia Brown</i>	(051261-1)	10th June 1940	(c)
<i>Song Of The Wanderer</i>	(050157-1)	26th April 1940	(a)
<i>Weary Blues</i>	(026859-1)	12th September 1938	(a)
<i>Don't Cry Baby</i>	(073288-1)	27th May 1942	(e)

**T**HIS AMERICAN LP is a strange haphazard collection covering the years 1938 to 1946. The tracks are not arranged in any sort of order and you get less for your money than with the French disc. However the record does include the band's three biggest hits.

*Tuxedo Junction*, the band's theme, which for some unknown reason opens Side 2, is by now a very well known jazz standard. The leader plays the opening trumpet call supported by saxes and brass and answered by Bill Johnson's alto; then comes Dud Bascomb's excellent trumpet chorus which has become one of the most imitated solos on wax. Heywood Henry's soaring clarinet trilling over 'oompah' brass interjections gives way to a subdued Hawkins fade-out. . . . . *After Hours* is all Avery Parrish; a low-down blues which builds and builds, backed up by solid bass work with lots of double-stopping by Lee Stanfield . . . . Bobby Smith's *Tippin' In* features his alto sax in the opening and closing choruses and used to be played night after night on the American Forces Network late-night record shows in the late-'forties. Bobby Johnson's muted trumpet, Julian Dash's tenor and the leader's familiar

high-note horn are also heard . . . . . *Sweet Georgia Brown* is a tour-de-force for Paul Bascomb. This is one of the great tenor sax solos, ranking with Coleman Hawkins's *Body And Soul* and Chu Berry's *Ghost Of A Chance*. Bascomb's characteristic economy of notes generates a powerful swing and he is pushed all the way by Stanfield and Morrison.

**III Erskine Hawkins / Cab Calloway Jazz Panorama LP 16**  
*Tuxedo Junction* Airshot Savoy Ballroom NYC 4th  
*I'll Be Faithful* March 1940 (a)  
*Whispering Grass*  
*Gin Mill Special*  
*Junction Blues*  
*Gabriel Meets The Duke*  
*Midnight Stroll*  
*Tuxedo Junction*

(Reverse side by Cab Calloway Orchestra)

**A** RATHER LOW-FI pressing of one of the band's broadcasts from the Savoy Ballroom complete with nauseating announcements. The band is in good form particularly on an extended *Junction Blues* and *Gabriel Meets The Duke* but oh that out-of-tune piano!

#### IV Golden Age Of Classic Swing (One track only)

German Brunswick 87099

(h) Erskine Hawkins, Bobby Johnson, James Harris, Sammy Lowe (trumpets); Bob Range, George Matthews, Andrew Penn (trombones); Bobby Smith, Jimmy Mitchell (altos); Julian Dash, Bobby Green (tenors); Heywood Henry (baritone); Ace Harris (piano); Leroy Kirkland (guitar); Lee Stanfield (bass); Ed McConney (drums)

*After Hours* (80262) Recorded NYC 6th December 1950 (h)

ERY MUCH a carbon-copy of the original Bluebird recording, this features Ace Harris in the famous Avery Parrish solo; Stanfield's bass work is still excellent.

#### V Great Swing Bands Of The Forties (Three tracks) British Ember CJS 808

(i) John Grimes (trumpet) replaces Harris; Ted Donnelly (trombone) replaces Penn; Freddy Jefferson (piano) replaces Harris; Sonny Payne (drums) replaces McConney

		Recorded NYC	
<i>Steel Guitar Rag</i>	(8130)	? January 1952	(i)
<i>Double Shot</i>	(9331)	23rd August 1953	(i)
<i>Down The Alley</i>	(9332)	" " "	(i)

**T**HE TITLE of this LP is a misnomer since all the tracks (the others are by Lucky Millinder, Charlie Spivak and Elliot Lawrence) were recorded in the fifties. The three Hawkins tracks are run-of-the-mill performances, the best one being *Down The Alley*, a simple blues by Sammy Lowe and Julian Dash and featuring the latter's tenor sax and Jefferson's piano with Stanfield rock-like and reliable as ever.

The Big Band Era is gone—but not forgotten by some of us—and during its two decades the Erskine Hawkins band never quite captured the imagination of the public - never featured prominently in the annual popularity polls run by the music magazines - and its records were reviewed very infrequently and usually unfavourably by the critics of those same magazines. Nevertheless heard in retrospect nearly thirty years later, the band compares very favourably with many of its better known contemporaries.

## PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

**DISCOGRAPHY OF MILES DAVIS** by Jorgen Grunnet Jepsen

**DISCOGRAPHY OF FREE JAZZ** (ALBERT AYLER, DON CHERRY, ORNETT COLEMAN, PHARAOH SANDERS, ARCHIE SHEPP, CECIL TAYLOR) - Compiled by Erik Raben.

(Both published by Karl Emil Knudsen, Dorth-eavej 39, 2400 Copenhagen NV., Denmark)

THESE ARE two further discographies in the series which has, so far, produced the complete

Charlie Parker and Lester Young listings reviewed by the Editor in the April issue. The booklets are the same size as Jepsen's *Jazz Records* (200 mm by 122 mm for those who have adjusted their minds to metrification), the Davis booklet runs to forty pages, the Free Jazz compilation to thirty-eight. Each is, of course, invaluable for the collector or discographer who is making a particular study of the artist in question. The Davis book commences with Miles's first (suspected) session with Rubberlegs Williams for Savoy on May 4, 1945 and ends with *Stuff* from the latest "Miles in the Sky" album, recorded on May 17, 1968. The twenty-three years encompassed by the discography prove that Davis has been a part of most of the really significant jazz developments including many Parker sessions, his own Capitol dates, the fine Prestige albums, "Kind Of Blue" and "Nerfertiti". Jepsen has included details of private tapes and transcriptions, where known. Here is one more which readers may care to pencil in: Miles Davis (tpt); Jimmy Forrest (ten); "Bunky" (p) (possibly Bunny Wells); unknown bass; Oscar Oldham (d). St. Louis, 1952. *All the things you are, Perdido, Our delight, Ow, Ladybird, What's new.*

Erik Raben's "Free Jazz" booklet contains information which I have not seen in print before (exact dates for John Coltrane - Don Cherry LP on Atlantic, full details of Buell Neidlinger's unissued Candid LP etc.) and is generally a very complete record of these six artists's activities. Perhaps it is too complete, in one sense, for a number of sessions are repeated in full. This is, of course, inevitable with this particular school of jazzman but I think some system of referring back to previous pages for certain details might have resulted in sufficient saving of space to include, say, complete discographies of Paul Bley and Grachan Moncur. For example, sixteen of the dates listed in the complete Don Cherry are duplicated further on in the Ornette Coleman section while a further nine of Cherry's sessions crop up again, in full of course, in the Shepp and Ayler sections. But I must not carp too much; obviously it is easier to refer to the work of any one artist in Erik's book as it stands and "Free Jazz" has the advantage of being up-to-date. The most recent date to be listed is a Don Cherry session of September last year.

ALUN MORGAN

**THE GREAT KENTON ARRANGERS** - Compiled and edited by Michael Sparke (published by Erngeobil Publications, 5421 South Carley Avenue, Whittier, California 90601, U.S.A. Price \$2.00)

THIS discography, in the now established format and usual satisfactory production standards of previous 'Jazz Discographies Unlimited' publications, deals with Bill Holman (7 pages), Johnny Richards (19 pages), Gene Roland (5 pages), Pete Rugolo (16 pages) and William Russo (19 pages), the five arrangers whom the compiler considers to have exerted the maximum influence on the Kenton organisation. Mr. Sparke will be well known to Kenton admirers for his thorough and scholarly *Kenton On Capitol* discography and this booklet maintains the high standard set in that work. In general, sessions listed were all issued under the name of the arrangers dealt with,

an exception being when certain Kenton LPs were used as a showcase for a particular arranger's skills. The actual discographies are as complete as one might expect, with in most instances solo routines listed for the large groups, in addition to the usual personnels, recording dates and locations, master numbers and takes, and issue numbers. Biographical outlines of the subjects' careers are included and a considerable amount of additional information of this nature is noted in the course of the recording session details. Private recordings and transcriptions are given in full, including those that William Russo made for the B.B.C. when he was leader of the London Jazz Orchestra during 1962-1964.

For readers interested in the output of these arrangers this is an indispensable publication. It can be obtained from Ernie Edwards, Jr. at the address listed above, or from Michael Sparke, 39 Wills Crescent, Hounslow, Middlesex.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

**CHARLIE PATTON** (Published by Blues World, 22 Manor Crescent, Knutsford, Cheshire. Price 5/-)

THE HIGHSPOT of this interesting 20 quarto page booklet on an archetypal Mississippi blues singer is David Evans's essay on Patton's life and music. Evans's writing on blues is amongst the most impressive in the field, and in two thousand words he delineates Patton's background, career and the nature of his recorded material in a concise and authoritative fashion. There is also a good introduction by Bob Groom, transcripts of fourteen of Patton's songs—a difficult task to do with complete accuracy, as anyone familiar with Patton's records will realise—and a discography. The latter, based on *Blues And Gospel Records*, is satisfactory but it would surely have been better to give LP release numbers in the main text rather than list the LPs on which Patton appears—though without individual titles. —in a box at the end? Sadly, David Evans reports that the masters of the sixteen unissued Patton Vocalion titles made in 1934 have been destroyed.

The lyric transcripts of all titles issued on the Origin label are to be given in a publication prepared by that company later in the year, and these have not been dealt with here. As a thoughtful and balanced introduction to a singular artist this is a most valuable booklet.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

**JAZZ IN PERSPECTIVE** by Charles Fox (published by the British Broadcasting Corporation, 35 Marylebone High Street, London, W.1. Price 10/-)

"A CLEAR, chronological account of the development of jazz for the intelligent layman"

proclaims the back cover, and the book is just that. In fact it is more than that, for even the specialised jazz enthusiast will learn a lot from this booklet. In many ways it is one of the most concise, capsule histories of jazz available even though the author, in a telephone conversation, modestly assured me that "it's not intended for the initiated". In his introduction Charles gently puts his finger on the truth with clarity. "To many otherwise cultured people" he writes "jazz is still something of an enigma. Part of the trouble springs from a fundamental misconception of what the music sets out to do. The single, most important fact to be grasped is that jazz is essentially an art of performance". Very true, but who else has made the point so clearly? There are eight chapters commencing with "The Beginnings", journeying on through the expected stopping-off places and closing with an examination of how jazz and pop are tending to merge. There is a bibliography and a selected listing of records to amplify the chapters. There are nearly fifty photographs (including Canal Street at about the turn of the century, the brass section of Lucky Millinder's 1934 band, the outside of the Cotton Club, John Surman playing soprano and Don Ellis wired for sound, which should give some idea of the breadth of the field covered). There are also street maps of New Orleans and Manhattan, the latter marked up to show the locations of Mintons, Clark Monroe's, Connie's Inn, the Tree of Hope, etc. In addition there are musical examples including a transcription of Bird's *Ornithology* solo, Louis's in-

troduction to *West End blues*, the three part improvising on *Panama* by the Kid Ory band and part of Ornette Coleman's solo on *Ramblin'*. The booklet measures about eight inches by five and a half, consists of eighty-eight pages and is printed on art paper. If all this were not enough it is, in fact, a handbook to a series of talks which Charles gave on Radio Three, commencing in April and continuing until May 15. But even if you were unable to hear the broadcasts then I feel sure the booklet has a valid place in every jazz collection. It is, after all, written by a man whose prose makes a great deal of contemporary jazz journalism look like the work of inept amateurs.

ALUN MORGAN

**VICTOR MASTER BOOK, VOLUME 2** by Brian Rust (Published by the compiler at 38, Grimsdyke Road, Hatch End, Pinner, Middlesex. Price £4. 10. 0.)

BRIAN RUST'S long awaited *Victor Master Book* is the result of years of patient research and

arduous checking of data; It commences with the first RCA Victor electrical recordings in 1925 and goes through to August 1936 when the matrix numbering system was changed.

After the explanatory introduction the main body of the work occupies just over 600 pages. Listed, in numerical sequence, are all master numbers devoted to popular recordings, whether issued or not. The lay-out employed is that of giving artists names for each session in capital letters, followed by what information is to be found on the recording sheets - director, instrumentation, vocalists and sundry miscellaneous notes. Then follows the recording location, master number, number of takes recorded for each title, song title, recording date and issue numbers.

The years 1925-1936 saw several revolutions take place in the scope of popular recorded music, not least the development of the 'race' and 'country' markets. This book enables us to glimpse the social history of popular entertainment during the years which it covers and on this count alone is a fascinating document. An interesting factor to emerge is the extent to which mobile recording vans covered the Southern and Southwestern states in search of blues, gospel, and country artists, the locations being more widely flung than I had anticipated. Inevitably the oddities attract the attention, such as the fact that a Dr. F. Bernstein of the University of Göttingen, Germany recorded *Holy, holy, holy* and *Go down, Moses* with a choir of ten Negro children. In the early days there seemed to be more difficulty in getting a satisfactory take recorded, Waring's Pennsylvanians running to fourteen on the same day before getting *Bolshevik* accepted (I was disappointed to hear from Brian Rust that there is no lyric to this number!), while Frank Banta commenced recording *Nola* on July 12th, 1926 and it was April 15th, 1927 and twenty-five takes later before he succeeded in achieving a version considered worthy of issue. By the mid-'thirties things were different and country artists ran off twenty-four titles at a session at the first attempt, and bands like Lunceford's and Goodman's had a high proportion of successful first takes.

Irish singers and the original Memphis Five seemed to experience difficulty in recording acceptable takes in the early days, and amongst the unissued sessions are two by vocalists Eddie Hunter and Alex Rogers of July/August 1927 on which the accompanist was Lucky Roberts. Page 349 offers an interesting session, for the titles by the Rev. F.W. McGee have a cornet, piano and two guitars as the accompanists, one of the titles being *Dead cat on the line*. This is the number the late Henry Allen claimed to have recorded with the Rev. J.M. Gates, though neither version by that preacher has a trumpet present, so it would be well worth hearing the Rev. McGee recording to check the backing.

Following the major section of the book there is a forty-two page numerical record index giving the matrix numbers on all relevant issued items on Victor, Bluebird, Electradisk and Sunrise. The final two parts of the book consists of a title index, compiled by Malcolm Shaw and Nevil Skrimshire, which lists sixteen thousand titles, and a nineteen page artist index. The whole book runs to 780 clear pages within a strong, functional binding, and is a triumph of painstaking research that cannot be too highly recommended. If demand warrants it, volumes 1 and 3 will follow.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

# RECORD REVIEWS

## NAT ADDERLEY

### THE SCAVENGER:

Nat Adderley (cnt); Joe Henderson (ten); Joe Zawinul (p); Victor Gaskin (bs); Roy McCurdy (d)

New York City - January 18 and 19, 1968

*Unilateral :: But not for me*

add Jeremy Steig (f)

same dates

*The scavenger*

Nat Adderley (cnt, el-tpt-1); Mel Lastie (cnt); Joe Zawinul (p); Victor Gaskin (bs); Roy McCurdy (d); unidentified string section; Bill Fischer (cond, arr);

same dates

*Sweet Emma :: Bittersweet -1*

omit Fischer and strings; Zawinul plays el-p

same dates

*Melnat :: Rise, Sally, rise*

**Milestone MSP 9016 (52/9d.)**

ON THE first set of tracks Joe Henderson comes through strongly, playing in a very confident way. Adderley is never less than efficient taking the general manner of his work from Miles, and though he sometimes produces some neat twists I find his work less adventurous, less personal, even if more organised, than it was some ten or more years ago. On *Scavenger* Jeremy Steig adds his Dophy-like flute to a quite intriguing line. The rhythm section is always strong. The second set of tracks is rather different; fairly certainly aimed at a less dedicated listener, and I would imagine Milestone has a single out from these in an attempt to build up a minor hit. Basically it's the old soul stuff taking the Tijuana Brass route, with the cornets popping away merrily, and though it's not original or deep it's at least better than some attempts to make the mass market. Lastie emerges as a musician of some substance, with a bright tone, plenty of ideas and an interesting, New Orleans kind of time. Altogether it's a by no means unpleasant record, but it's a bit of a lightweight.

JACK COOKE

## CLIFFORD BROWN

### I REMEMBER CLIFFORD:

Clifford Brown (tpt); Richie Powell (p); Barry Galbraith (g); George Morrow (bs); Max Roach (d); unknown strings; Neal Hefti (arr, cond)

New York City - January 18, 1955

11118 *Yesterdays*

New York City - January 19, 1955

11121 *Smoke gets in your eyes*

11122 *Laura*

New York City - January 20, 1955

11126 *Willow weep for me*

11127 *Stardust*

Clifford Brown (tpt); Harold Land (ten); Richie Powell (p); George Morrow (bs); Max Roach (d)

New York City - February 23, 1955

11359 *Take the A train*

New York City - February 24, 1955

*If I love again*

New York City - February 25, 1955

11366 *Cherokee*

11367 *Sandu*

Sonny Rollins (ten) replaces Land; Powell also plays celeste

New York City - January 4, 1956

12422 *Time*

**Mercury SMWL21021 (28/7d.)**

ONCE AGAIN I am forced to begin with discographical matters. This is a straight reissue of Am. Mercury MG20827 (Jepsen wrongly quotes this number for *What is this thing called love* and *The scene is clean* in place of *If I love again* and *Time*) and thus it duplicates four tracks of the last Brownie reissue to appear here (the 2-LP "Memorial Album" 20090/1 MCL), which in turn duplicated three tracks of the previous one ("Remember Clifford", 20022MCL, alias "Easy!", Fontana FJL134). Of course, if you followed my advice not to buy the boxed set, you can now possess two whole unconflicting LPs of Clifford's Mercury output (i.e. this new one and "Easy!", which is still the one to get first), but it's a great pity that Alun Morgan's involvement with English Mercury reissues came presumably too late to prevent this compound cock-up. And once again, having got that off my chest, I am forced to try and rationalize my lack of enthusiasm for Clifford Brown himself. What John Postgate approvingly called his "gentleness" (*JM*, Aug.67) I find to be a fault and an anachronism—stylistically speaking, for gentleness seems inappropriate to the phraseology Clifford had inherited from Dizzy and Fats Navarro. Of his fellow-inheritors, the humour of Clark Terry and the profundity of Miles (even the subtlety of Art Farmer) were equally beyond his grasp and, of his own followers, the volatile Freddie Hubbard and the sardonic Lee Morgan are more satisfying, more *jazzy*. Brownie is just too level-headed for my liking, and the comparison between him and Beiderbecke, valid in most details, leads me to quote Gunther Schuller (*Early Jazz*) on the latter's "one limitation an inability to break out of the conservative framework of his style". In fact, the most important soloist to work with the Roach-Brown Quintet was of course Sonny Rollins, and it's interesting how Richie Powell, who plays rather badly here, came out of his shell when Rollins joined (cf. the last Mercury LP, and "Rollins Plus 4" alias "3 Giants!" on Prestige/Transatlantic). This record lasts 40 minutes and *A train* is edited, as on previous issues: the sound is very early (1963) simulated stereo, with the musicians in the middle and loads of echo channelled to left and right.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

## CHARLIE BYRD

### BYRD AT THE GATE:

Clark Terry (tpt -1); Seldon Powell (ten -2); Charlie Byrd (g); Keter Betts (bs); Bill Reichenbach (d)

Village Gate, New York City - May 9 and 10, 1963

*Shiny stockings :: More (theme from Mondo Cane) -2 :: Blues for night people :: Butter and egg man -1 :: Ela me deixou -2 :: Broadway -1, 2 :: I left my heart in San Francisco :: Some other spring -1 :: Where are the Hebrew children?*

**Riverside 673.010 (37/6d.)**

THIS LP was first released here during the late summer of 1964; Eddie Lambert reviewed it in these columns in the October, 1964 issue. It is one of those many, many "pleasant" releases which make a reviewer's task so difficult.

Byrd plays quite beautifully throughout and it is good to hear an acoustic guitar again. (The very idea of someone sitting down to play an unamplified guitar, rather than standing up and beating hell out of an electric monster, seems almost quaint nowadays.) My chief criticism of Byrd has always been his apparent lack of involvement with the material at hand. On the seven minute *Blues for night people*, for example, he plays all the right notes yet somehow sounds very detached from the whole process of music making. *Shiny stockings* gets into a relaxed groove and, at the other end of the spectrum, the folksy *Hebrew children* is expertly played. The two guests shine on *Broadway* where Clark Terry's two choruses contain more jazz involvement than almost anything Byrd plays. Seldon Powell is used to conjure up the Stan Getz-like bossa nova atmosphere on a couple of tracks; his solo on *Broadway* outing, sounds very off-hand and I suspect he was unsure of the melody of *Big butter and egg man*. A victory then for Byrd who clearly aimed his Village Gate music at the more sophisticated elements in the audience. The recording balance is good and the playing time is thirty-seven and a half minutes.

ALUN MORGAN

### DONALD BYRD

#### SLOW DRAG:

Donald Byrd (tpt); Sonny Red (Sylvester Kyner) (alt); Cedar Walton (p); Walter Booker (bs); Billy Higgins (d, vcl-1)  
Englewood Cliffs, N.J. - 1968

*Slow drag -1 :: Secret love :: Book's bossa :: Jelly roll :: The loner :: My ideal*

Blue Note BST84292 (47/5d.)

THERE'S not much happening on this LP, and what does happen happens on the two 8-to-the bar R-and-B-type numbers, *Slow drag* and *Jelly roll*. There is a beauty in the sound of a rhythm section grooving along in a solid 8 —the same beauty as that of a swing-style rhythm section chugging along in a solid 4, or a hand-clapping congregation belting out a solid off-beat — which is the difference between predictability and sheer inevitability. But the soloist who uses such a backing has to be either equally inevitable or very unpredictable, because mere predictability is superfluous in this context. Donald Byrd tries to solve the problem by being so lazy and playing so little that he sets up a certain tension by default, as it were; He seems to be aiming for the severe economy of Miles Davis c.1961, and the ballad solo on *My ideal* is as good as impersonation as I have heard. Of course, Byrd does little playing these days, and perhaps he is better employed as an advanced student and teacher of music (at university level); certainly, on this evidence I prefer Sonny Red, a slightly incoherent mixture of Dolphy and McLean, who is at least trying to achieve something, even if it's only a less precarious control over his chosen instrument. The chief claim to fame of these 38 minutes is Billy Higgins's Jimmy Smith-type "talking blues" on the title track, which is more relaxed and more subtle rhythmically than any of the other solos.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

### CLASSIC GUITAR BLUES

PEG LEG HOWELL (vcl, g)

Atlanta, Ga. - April 20, 1928

146160-1 *Rock and gravel blues*

146161-1 *Low-down rounder blues*

SYLVESTER WEAVER (vcl, g)

New York City - April 12, 1927

80720-B *True love blues*

80721-B *Poor boy blues*

MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT (vcl, g)

Memphis - February 14, 1928

400221-B *Frankie*

New York City - December 28, 1928

401488-B *Spike driver blues*

New York City - June 4, 1931

404922-A *My pencil won't write no more*

404929-B *Backache blues*

404932-A *Boot it*

Atlanta, Ga. - October 24, 1931

405016-2 *I've got a case of mashin' it*

CARL MARTIN (vcl, g); unknown (bs)

Chicago - January 8, 1935

C-877-1 *Farewell to you, baby*

C-878- *You can't play me cheap*

C-881-1 *Badly mistreated man*

C-882- *Good morning, judge*

CURLEY WEAVER (vcl, g); Blind Willie McTell (g-1)

Chicago - April 23, 1935

C-9939-B *Sometime mama*

C-9941-A *Two-faced woman -1*

Confidential M CLP 002 (35/-)

THIS IS A tidy compilation, with all the marks of an album inspired by a good collection of 78s rather than a wish to illustrate a theme. Like many LPs of this kind it duplicates previously reissued material; the two Hurt pieces (better transferred) were on the Folkways "American Folk Music" set, and Howell's *Rounder* was included in RBF's "Country Blues Volume 1". The other Howell performance is on Roots RL-309, where it is stressed that the first take has been used, so perhaps Confidential's version is an alternate one; I haven't been able to check this yet. Finally, Martin's *Farewell* and *Badly* are to appear on Yazoo L-1016.

Many collectors, then, will be familiar with at least a quarter of the album, and will want to know something about the remainder. The most interesting performances, I think, are those by Carter. Three come from his extremely bawdy third session, which also produced *Banana in your fruit basket*, *Pin in your cushion* and other intriguing titles; the lyrics, which are mainly about sexual technique and consequent exhaustion (impotence already, in *Pencil*), are set against a disconcertingly delicate accompaniment, which has some rather lovely passages. Carl Martin's four songs (a complete session, by the way) provide a good example of Big Bill Broonzy's influence, notably on vocal delivery, but Martin is no Bumble Bee Slim, and he puts a good deal of himself into the pieces; the unusual guitar figures are particularly well executed. Pete Welding recorded him in Chicago three years ago, both duetting with Johnny Young and playing in a four-man string-band, and I hope these new performances will soon be issued, for Martin's career (described by Welding in *78 Quarterly* 1.2) was an interesting one. Curley Weaver's 'thirties records seem to me peculiarly unexciting (his postwar ones were unexpectedly vigorous) but *Two-faced* has an unusual subject — a bespectacled girlfriend. Sylvester Weaver (unrelated) now has five reissued pieces, but I don't think the vogue will last, for his singing has only one virtue, intelligibility. A frequent accompanist of Sara Martin, he appears to have absorbed some of her style but none of her verve. Of the Hurt and Howell cuts it is necessary to say only that they are all excellent; the Howells are among his very best. Enthusiasts who don't already own them will find this LP a very worthwhile purchase; others will probably have first to estimate their fondness for Bo Carter and Carl Martin. Transfer quality is quite good, but no doubt better on discs less grotesquely warped than mine.

TONY RUSSELL

### JOHN COLTRANE

#### MY FAVOURITE THINGS:

John Coltrane (sop-1); McCoy Tyner (p); Steve Davis (bs); Elvin Jones (d)

New York City - October 21, 1960

A5400 *My favourite things -1*

New York City - October 26, 1960

*But not for me -2*

*Everytime we say goodbye -1*

Atlantic 588.146 (37/6d.)

POLYDOR is making available all eight of the John Coltrane LPs from the Atlantic catalogue (It is rumoured strongly that a ninth, by Coltrane with strings, remains in the can over in New York.) This is the first to be re-released and is, in fact, volume five of the new series. It was the first complete Coltrane album to be issued by John's own regular group. I can still remember the impact it had on me when first I heard the ethereal sound of that other-wordly soprano weaving about above the see-sawing piano of McCoy Tyner and the fluid drumming of Elvin Jones. In many ways this heralded jazz

of the 'sixties; this record helped to open a few doors and showed that freedom could be achieved within the comparative discipline of a show tune. One thing which Coltrane had in his favour from a very early stage of his career was a readily identifiable, personal sound. No other saxophonist in jazz has ever sounded quite like Coltrane on tenor and with the release of *Things* it became obvious that no other soprano saxophonist had sounded that way before. On the smaller saxophone John came close to sounding like a human voice as he soared above the mesmeric effect of the rhythm section. *Summertime* is the second major track on the LP, this time a *tour-de-force* on tenor using the multi-faceted "sheets of sound" technique with an authority which no other tenor saxist had achieved. *But not for me*, the second tenor track, gives the impression that the entire solo was carved out of one tangible piece of sound and preserved for posterity. By contrast the short (five minutes, thirty-nine second) *Everytime we say goodbye* is a restful experience and is, in fact, a showcase for the delicate, well-mannered piano of McCoy Tyner. This LP was, of course, first released here on the London label; then, as now, it played for just over forty minutes and it is required listening for any reader who professes to have an interest in contemporary jazz.

ALUN MORGAN

### DEJAN'S OLYMPIA BRASS BAND

#### IN EUROPE

Andrew Anderson, Milton Battiste (tpt); Paul Crawford (tbn); Harold Dejan (alt); Emmanuel Paul (ten); unknown (tu); Andrew Jefferson (snare); Henry 'Booker T' Glass (bass drum)

London - August 4, 1968

*St. Louis Blues* :: *Telephone to glory* :: *West Lawn dirge* :: *Bugle boy march* :: *The second line* :: *She'll be coming round the mountain* :: *Olympia Special (No.31)* :: *Lord, Lord, Lord* :: *E flat blues*

77 M LEU 12/31 (39/5d.)

'DOESN'T tuning matter in music like this?' enquired a rather bewildered visitor who happened to arrive when I was playing through this LP. The answer is that it matters less than in most areas of jazz, though on one or two occasions the limits of permissiveness are reached during these performances.

The great merit of New Orleans brass band music is its tremendous vitality. It is a peoples music - if I might use such an emotive phrase - and like most popular art has its moments of vulgarity and sentimentality, the latter exemplified here by the dirges *West Law* and *Olympia special*, the first title including a solo by Paul that uses a most tremendous vibrato. The two sax men are masters of the idiom, their duet on *Olympia* being particularly fine.

Apart from the two dirges the performances are up tempo and the band bounces along in fine style, Anderson playing a controlled middle register part that is very apt in context while Battiste is more adventurous and occasionally more disorganised. The sheer rhythmic drive of performances like *She'll be coming*, *Bugle boy* and *E flat* the latter being notable for the manner in which Paul uses a riff to push things along, result in such a feeling of exuberance that faulty tuning genuinely seems of little importance. I have a liking for this kind of music, maybe the result of an early indoctrination into brass band contests, and anyone who shares such a taste will find this a thoroughly enjoyable record. Those with doubts should try to hear *West Lawn* and *She'll be coming*, the most contrasting tracks, before making a decision. Recording is reasonable, playing time 37 minutes, and the tune here titled *The second line* has previously appeared as *Joe Avery's blues*.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

### SIDNEY DE PARIS

#### De PARIS DIXIE:

Sidney de Paris (tpt); Vic Dickenson (tbn); Edmond Hall (clt); James P. Johnson (p); Jimmy Arthur Shirley (g); John Simmons (bs); Sid Catlett (d)

New York City - June 21, 1944

BN 981-1 *Everybody loves my baby*

BN 983-1 *Who's sorry now*

Sidney de Paris (tpt); Jimmy Archey (tbn); Omer Simeon (clt); Robert Green (p); Pops Foster (bs); Joseph Smith (d)

New York City - June 14, 1951

386 *When you wore a tulip*

386-1 *When you wore a tulip*

387-2 *Weary blues*

388 *Moose march*

389-1 *Panama*

390 *Please don't talk about me when I'm gone*

391-1 *A good man is hard to find*

Blue Note M B-6501 (47/5d.)

SIDNEY de Paris, despite Mezzrow's contempt for his 'swing' influences, was a creative jazz musician with his roots in the New Orleans Idiom. Like Armstrong, Bechet, Allen, Hall, Singleton; Indeed, like all the best New Orleans men, he adapted his style to later developments. His fault, perhaps, was not to have been born in the Crescent City. He reached his peak with Brother Wilbur de Paris's New New Orleans Jazz Band of the mid 'fifties, an erratic and sometimes brilliant group whose musical success owed much to Sidney's convoluted, highly personal muted work. The first two tracks here are an example of early de Paris revivalism; they are two of four much sought-after tracks from the days of 78s (they appeared briefly on 10 inch LP in the 'fifties). Acoustically they are poor and the ensembles owe more to 'forties jam sessions than to New Orleans, but Hall and Dickinson take good, earthy solos and de Paris shows that he was a good 'hot' man even in those days. Catlett's drumming and Johnson's piano do a lot for the records, in contrast to the later session, where the dull drumming and Morton imitations on piano mar otherwise good performances. The later ensembles are more thoughtful, more integrated and, though the solos are less ebullient, the music is closer to the musicianly development of New Orleans jazz which Wilbur de Paris was later to strive for and sometimes succeed in producing. Archey's trombone, for which I always have a soft spot, gambols along amiably and Simeon's clarinet is good, despite suspect pitching. But de Paris was still developing and did better in later years. Admirers of Wilbur de Paris's later group will welcome this issue. Incidentally, I see no point in offering the two takes of *When you wore a tulip*, they are almost identical and the remaining two tracks from the 1944 session (*Ballin' the jack* and *Call of the blues*) would have been far more rewarding.

JOHN POSTGATE

### EDDIE GALE

#### EDDIE GALE'S GHETTO MUSIC:

Eddie Gale (tpt); Russell Lyle (ten, fl-1); Judah Samuel, James 'Tokio' Reed (bs); Richard Hackett, Thomas Holman (d); Joann Gale (vcl, g-2); Elaine Beener, Sylvia Bibbs, Barbara Dove, Evelyn Goodwin, Art Jenkins, Fulumi Prince, Norman Right, Edward Walrond, Sondra Walston, Mildred Weston (vcl)

Englewood Cliffs, N.J. - September 20, 1968

*The rain-2* :: *Fulton Street* :: *A understanding* :: *A walk with thee* :: *The coming of Gwiliu -1*

Note: On *Gwiliu* Eddie Gale also plays soprano recorder, thumb piano, steel drum and bird whistle.

Blue Note BST 84294 (47/5d.)

EDDIE GALE has recorded with Cecil Taylor, on Blue Note's *Unit structures* album (BST 84237) but this is his first album as a leader. It's interesting and enjoyable and well worth investigating, and discussion of it is only slightly complicated by the fact that a couple of albums to which it relates very strongly have never been made generally available here. Gale's music relies on a vocal and instrumental method very similar to that on Max Roach's *It's time* album (Impulse A-16), and though Donald Byrd has worked with a similar setup (his best album being *A new perspective*, Blue Note BST 84124) it's Roach's work to which Gale's is closer. The chorus here is used sometimes with the horns, sometimes against them, horns and voices used to introduce different themes or parts of the same theme, as one big ensemble or as a background to themes stated by the horns; but always the voices are used to enclose the solos,

which is a little less adventurous than the way Roach used them in his album, involving them with soloists as well as using them thematically, but on the other hand Gale gets a looser, less academic sound from them than Coleridge Parkinson's conducting got from Roach's singers. It may be a little stagy at times — nobody has yet completely integrated choral singing into jazz — but it often becomes a fine sound and there's never the least suggestion of heavenly choirs or anything like that.

The themes themselves are, again, sometimes reminiscent of Roach, with their bold lines and strong rhythmic drive; one of them, *Gwilu*, echoes very strongly the second half of Roach's *We insist: the freedom now suite* (Candid 8002), with the call-and-response pattern set up and led by Elaine Beener being very like the Abbey Lincoln-Michael Olatunji duet *All Africa*, while the horn theme is reminiscent, at the start very reminiscent, of *Tears for Johannesburg*. It's most interesting to hear these things coming out here, because *We insist*, was recorded in 1960 and a lot has happened in jazz since then. In some ways these two Roach records were ahead of their time though; *It's time* was the most successful exploration of a field of music that hardly anyone has set foot in since, let alone explored, while *We insist* was the first overt statement of black militancy in jazz that I know of, and as such might have had an effect on a rising generation of musicians that is only now beginning to show.

There is another related point that might be made: John Norris, in his liner note, suggests that *Ghetto music*—and I still don't know if this is the name of the album, the group, or of a particular production—is intended to have a visual, acting side to it, and the cover pictures further suggest this; in this theatrical dimension it's perhaps not hard to see something of the methods of Archie Shepp, though the music is quite different.

Gale takes the bulk of the solo work on himself, and this exposure reveals him as a considerable trumpeter. He works out of a generalised Freddie Hubbard idiom, though with a rather more bitter edge to it than is generally the case, into an area where he can begin sorting out his own personality. There are odd echoes of Don Ayler too, but essentially Gale shows every sign of becoming increasingly personal as time goes on, as has happened in the past to such men as Lee Morgan, Wayne Shorter or Joe Henderson; and he is, even now, a brilliant technician. His wife, Joann Gale, wrote the only lyric on the album, for *The rain*, and leads the singing on this sweeping line with delicacy. Lyle is an efficient second horn and the rhythm men play down any inclinations towards virtuosity they might have to produce a really solid and weighty rhythmic base for the performances. And if I might make a final point, note how the drummers manage to capture the flavour of Max Roach's very individual cymbal beat at the start of *The rain*.

JACK COOKE

## GIORGIO GASLINI

### GRIDO:

Sergio Fanni, Emilio Soane (tpt); Dino Piano, Giancarlo Romani (tbn); Gianni Bedori, Glauco Masetti (alt); Eraldo Volonte (ten); Sergio Rigon (bar); Giorgio Gaslini (p); Carlo Milano (bs); Steve Lacy (sop-1); plus unidentified personnel, including at least 1 fr-hn; 1 reed; bs; d; Bruno Crovetto (unidentified instrument)

Concert, Italy c. 1968

*Invention :: Il fiume furore :: All'origine :: Canto per i martiri negri :: Grido -1*

### Durium A 77199

FIRST OF all, the balance is quite disastrous; very rarely can the complete ensemble be heard, some part of it being submerged under another, and not always the same parts predominating, while soloists now and again disappear into their accompaniments. Lacy's brief appearance is largely nullified by his being faded out just after the start of his solo. So to begin with there's the reservation that: since you can't in fact hear all the music you might be missing the best of it, and perhaps sometimes the logic of it. But over the whole of the record there's little comes to light that isn't somewhat derivative and sometimes rather obvious, so it's possible, I think, to presume that what can't be heard isn't necessarily better. Gaslini's ideas hover somewhere between the Monk big bands and some of the

things Pete Rugolo wrote for Stan Kenton in the early 1950's, while the soloists reflect every shade of thinking between early hard bop and Albert Ayler. This variety might have sparked something off, and indeed towards the end of *Fiume* something does begin to happen, highlighted by a fierce alto solo from — I presume — Bedori, but most of the time the disparate elements in the band refuse to come together, so taking it one way and another this 'st be reckoned a disappointing record.

JACK COOKE

## STAN GETZ

### FOCUS ON STAN GETZ:

Stan Getz (ten); Lou Levy (p); Leroy Vinnegar (bs); Stan Levey (d)

Los Angeles - November 24, 1956

- 4059 *Blues for Mary Jane*
- 4060 *There'll never be another you*
- 4061 *You're blase*
- 4062 *Too close for comfort*
- 4063 *Like someone in love*
- 4064 *How about you*

Los Angeles - August 2, 1957

- 21227 *Smiles*
- 21228 *Three little words*
- 21231 *Time after time*
- 21232 *This can't be love*

Stan Getz (ten) acc string orchestra including Beaux Arts String Quartet (Gerald Tarack, Alan Martin (vln); Jacob Glick (vla); Bruce Rogers (vlc)); Roy Haynes (d); Hershy Kay (dir); Eddie Sauter (arr, comp)

New York City - July, September and October 1961

*I'm late, I'm late :: Her :: Pan :: I remember when :: Night rider :: Once upon a time :: A summer afternoon*

Verve SVSP 29/30 (37/5d.)

A USEFUL two-LP set this, for it allows us to compare Getz's reactions to quite different contexts. The titles with strings, all of them Sauter compositions, originally made up an issue called *Focus* which, according to Alun Morgan in *Jazz on Record*, is the tenorist's favourite disc. It seems that like players of an older generation, especially tenors, some of the post-war men, too, are keen on the symphonic respectability of a string orchestra. Once can perfectly well understand Getz welcoming the varied challenges of these settings, but if the sleeve note likens him, in *I'm late, I'm late*, to the White Rabbit on his way to that tea party in Wonderland, it is necessary to point out that he never really gets there (pun intended). Certainly the string scoring rises above the abysmal standard of most such dates—in fact that Doormouse might complain about a lack of treacle—yet it remains severely limited in relation to the vast capabilities of these instruments. While the ostinato figures on *I'm late* and *Night rider* are dreadfully stale, Sauter is undoubtedly most effective at their faster tempos: on slow pieces, such as *Her* or *I remember when*, the strings provide a background only whereas in *Night rider*, *I'm late*, and to a lesser extent *Pan*, tenor and strings do get fairly close to integration. But even in these best moments they are still speaking different languages.

If anything, Getz plays even more beautifully on the string tracks than in those with his more accustomed rhythm section backing—where Lou Levy shines. Yet all the time his tone is warm and luminous, the melodic invention never falters but is rarely glib, while spontaneity and perfect finish are reconciled to a degree which, not surprisingly, is very rare. Listening to Getz at his best, as to Paul Desmond, makes one wish jazz had more room for the particular qualities such musicians have to offer; Desmond and Getz have both done well in their careers, but of course that's not what I'm talking about.

MAX HARRISON

## BENNY GOODMAN

### THE JAZZ INFLUENCE:

Benny Goodman (clt); Columbia Jazz Combo; Leonard Bernstein (cond) Bernstein: *Prelude, fugue and riffs* same with Morton Gould (cond) replacing Bernstein Gould: *Derivations for clarinet and band* same with Igor Stravinsky (cond) replacing Gould

Stravinsky: *Ebony concerto*

Benny Goodman (clt); Columbia Symphony Orchestra; Aaron Copland (cond) Copland: *Clarinet concerto*

CBS 72496 (43/9d.)

GOODMAN plays superbly, far better than on any of his jazz records of the past 20 years.

These pieces illustrate that indirect jazz influence to which straight composers quite often responded in lighter moments from the 'twenties to the 'forties but which now appears a spent force.

Though written for Goodman, the Copland is least in that shadow, and his jazz leanings are better revealed in the early *Music for Theater* and Piano Concerto (both CBS 72352). Instead, this clarinet work establishes a gravely pastoral mood followed by one of dancing, bucolic gaiety, and even if the latter finally acquires sophistication it stays far from that urban wilderness much of Copland's music inhabits.

The other pieces use jazz procedures as an exotic stylistic resource—an equivalent to the 'Turkish' movements of Mozart and Beethoven, to the 'Persian' music in Glinka's *Russlan and Ludmilla*, etc. Stravinsky's *Piano rag music* and *La Creation due Monde* by Milhaud remain the finest examples of this, and the latter could substantially have improved the LP by replacing Gould's dull contribution. Bernstein shows his usual magpie compositional faculty and, like Gould, juggles amusingly enough with decades-old swing-band clichés.

Of course, the *Ebony concerto* is the best music here, and this partly because Stravinsky had sense enough not to emulate jazz too closely, despite this being composed for Woody Herman. Thus—and such features as the slow movement's blue false relations notwithstanding—the work's first subject is an ambiguously syncopated trumpet fanfare which is so deliberately corny that when developed along conventional sonata-form lines the result sounds synical, an ironic neo-baroque equivalent to Stravinsky's 1945 *Symphony in Three Movements*: that is how we should hear the *Ebony concerto*, not as an attempt at jazz. MAX HARRISON

### EDMOND HALL

#### CELESTIAL EXPRESS:

Edmond Hall (clt); Meade Lux Lewis (cls); Charlie Christian (acoustic g); Israel Crosby (bs)

New York City - February 5, 1941

R-3459-A *Jammin' in four*

R-3460 *Edmond Hall Blues*

R-3461 *Profoundly blue*

R-3461-2 *Profoundly blue No.2*

R-3462-A *Celestial express*

Edmond Hall (clt); Red Norvo (vib); Teddy Wilson (p); Carl Kress (g); Johnny Williams (bs)

New York City - January 25, 1944

BN-908-2 *Rompin' in 44*

BN-909 *Blue interval*

BN-910-2 *Smooth sailin'*

BN-911 *Seein' Red*

Blue Note Ⓜ B-6505 (45/7d.)

THIS LP offers 37 minutes of attractive, relaxed jazz. The balance on the first session seems to favour Lewis strongly at times, though his prominence is due in part to the nature of his instrument. All four themes used on the 1941 date are blues written by Lewis, only *Celestial* having any straight boogie playing. Lewis handles his instrument with an imagination that precludes the suspicion that he chose it for gimmickry, using strong percussive patterns on *Jammin'* and *Celestial* that contrast well with his charming solos on *Edmond* and *Profoundly*. It is ironic in view of the subsequent history of the label to recall that Messrs. Lion and Wolfe prevented Christian using an electric guitar on the date, though his abilities both as a rhythm guitarist and soloist are still highlighted. Crosby was an outstanding bassist for the period, while Hall is his usual confident self, soloing most effectively on *Jammin'* and the second *Profoundly*.

On the 1944 session Hall's playing seems more strongly Goodman influenced, his best work being on *Blue*. I find these tracks, slightly inferior in recording quality to those from the 1941 date, pleasant if basically rather unmemorable. Wilson is as neatly efficient as ever, Norvo seems to try hardest to get things moving,

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and Kress's solos are agreeable, but if nothing startling results the sheer professionalism of the participants ensures that the music seldom becomes entirely routine. To summarise: A good LP worth having for the five tracks from the 1941 date in particular. The first five Blue Note reissue LPs are all well packaged in a folder type album, having full personnel data and usually excellent sleeve notes. ALBERT MCCARTHY

### EDMOND HALL/ART HODES

#### ORIGINAL BLUE NOTE JAZZ, VOL.1:

##### EDMOND HALL'S BLUE NOTE JAZZMEN:

Sidney DeParis (tpt); Vic Dickenson (tbn); Edmond Hall (clt); James P. Johnson (p); Jimmy Shirley (g); Israel Crosby (bs); Sid Catlett (d)

New York City - November 29, 1943

901-2 *High Society*

901 *High society No.2\**

903 *Blues at Blue Note*

905 *Night shift blues*

907 *Royal Garden blues*

##### ART HODES AND HIS BLUE NOTE JAZZMEN:

Max Kaminsky (tpt); Vic Dickenson (tbn); Edmond Hall (clt); Art Hodes (p); Jimmy Shirley (g); Sid Weiss (bs); Danny Alvin (d)

New York City - June 1, 1944

977 *Sweet Georgia Brown*

978-1 *Squeeze me\**

979 *Sugar foot stomp\**

980 *Bugle call rag\**

980-2 *Bugle call rag No.2\**

Note: Titles marked with an asterisk are previously unissued takes.

Blue Note Ⓜ B-6504 (45/7d.)

IT IS GOOD to know that after all these years Blue Note are finally undertaking a reissue programme, with items by James P. Johnson, Meade Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons, Ike Quebec and others to follow later in 1969. The Hall session has its surprises, the 'traditional' titles producing the most individual performances. Catlett's drumming is superb throughout but the soloists produce their best work on different numbers - DeParis and Dickenson on the two takes of *High* and *Night*, Hall on *Blues at* and *Night shift*, and Johnson on *Royal Garden*. Johnson, like most pianists of the stride school, does not sound very convincing on the slow blues numbers but plays his part excellently in a first rate rhythm section. The most interesting solo on the whole LP is DeParis's on the second *High society* and one regrets that this fine musician found himself in such stereotyped settings in later years. The music from this date is a blend of Dixieland and swing that, a quarter of a century after being recorded, still sounds fresh.

Hodes's style has its limitations, particularly when he is featured at any length, but he is a very solid pianist in the ensemble and in support of others, while his rolling blues solos are agreeable. Kaminsky always was an outstanding ensemble leader and here tackles the traditional solo on *Sugar foot* with credit, but the best solos on this date are by Hall and Dickenson. The latter is excellent on *Sugar foot* and *Squeeze me*, rephrasing the melodic line of the latter number in typical fashion, while Hall plays with more relaxation and greater creativity than on his own session, excluding only *Night shift*. Hodes led, from his own standpoint, more cohesive groups than this, yet the music from this date is generally interesting and seldom purely routine.

A good, if not wholly successful record, most notable for the quota of worthwhile solos and the brilliant drumming of Catlett. The recording is reasonable though surface noise is heavy at times; playing time is 39½ minutes. ALBERT MCCARTHY

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## JOE HENDERSON

### TETRAGON:

Joe Henderson (ten); Kenny Barron (p); Ron Carter (bs); Louis Hayes (d)

New York City - September 27, 1967

*Tetragon :: First trip :: I've got you under my skin*

Don Friedman (p) and Jack DeJohnette (d) replace Barron and Hayes

New York City - May 16, 1968

*Invitation :: R.J. :: Waltz for sweetie :: The bead game*

**Milestone MSP 9017 (52/9d.)**

MOST OF what Joe Henderson has got to say these days is his own: his style grows out of a generalised later hard bop idiom, with Rollins's influence predominating, but beyond this there's a lot of original thought in his work, and also now a sense of security within his style; he organises his solos well, paces himself nicely, and has developed a distinctive tone quality. He's working with a wide range of material here, from *Night and day* to the fast, free, *Bead game*, yet what he does on these disparate vehicles is recognisably the product of one mind. He imposes his style on the material and produces a varied yet coherent series of statements. In all he does he's well supported by the two rhythm sections. The Friedman-DeJohnette team, as might be expected, comes off best when it's being most adventurous, as on *Bead game*; the Barron - Hayes team, on the other hand, is used in the loose swinging context that fits so well, and Hayes, particularly, is most impressive here. All in all this is the best and most mature record I've so far heard from Henderson.

JACK COOKE

## EARL HINES

THE FABULOUS EARL 'FATHA' HINES WITH RALPH CARMICHAEL'S SWINGIN' BIG BAND:

Earl Hines (p) with unknown brass, reeds, guitar, bass and drums.  
Ralph Carmichael (arr, dir)

Probably Los Angeles - c. May, 1963

*My Monday date :: I ain't got nobody :: Memories of you ::  
Little girl :: Cavernism :: I want a little girl :: Rosetta :: Ann  
:: As long as I live :: Thou swell :: After all I've been to you ::  
Deep forest*

**Music For Pleasure MFP1270 (14/6d.)**

ONE ADVANTAGE of the cheap-cheap record labels is that the buyer seldom fails to get value for money. By Hines's own standards this LP is worth about fourteen and six, so who can complain? Well, I can for one if only on the grounds of missed opportunities. The original intention was for Hines to make an LP with the Kenton band (Stan has never made any secret of his admiration for Earl) but this proved not to be possible for unspecified reasons. The result was this album (originally American Capitol TT1971, released in November, 1963 but never previously issued here); according to Blase Machin's sleeve note the backings were devised by Ralph Carmichael, "one of the finest arrangers in the US today, who has arranged and conducted for Nat King Cole and Stan Kenton". Now I would have no objection to a Kenton arranger scoring for Hines if that arranger was, say, Bill Holman, Johnny Richards, Marty Paich or Gene Roland, but Carmichael's contribution to the Kenton book seems to comprise the Christmas Album (never issued here) and a few singles including *Mama sang a song* (vocal by Kenton and a choir) and an adaptation of *Silent night* entitled *What is a Santa Claus*. Obviously Carmichael approached the Hines album project as just another chore. The band plays brilliantly in a very slick, well-drilled manner, but for all the integration between band and soloist they might just as well have been producing one of those add-a-part Music Minus One records for students. Given his head for a chorus or so (as at the beginning of *Deep forest* and *Rosetta*) Earl is in great form and it would have suited everyone's purpose if the brass and reeds had been paid just to sit there and listen to Hines romping through these twelve tunes with Carmichael's guitar, bass and drums. The brass is kept under wraps most of the time and although a solo trumpet (sounding about midway between Jack Sheldon and Don Fagerquist) is heard on nearly every track, it is tightly muted on each occasion. There is

a short and anonymous tenor solo on *Thou swell* and some brass passages on *As long as I live* which give some idea of what might have been achieved if Budd Johnson had done the writing. The playing time is thirty-three minutes, the recording quality is well up to Capitol's high standards and, at fourteen and six, you get what you pay for.

ALUN MORGAN

### BILLIE HOLIDAY - AL HIBBLER

AL HIBBLER WITH HARRY CARNEY'S ALL STARS:

Al Hibbler (vcl) acc Taft Jordan, Harold Baker (tpt); Russell Procope (alt); Jack McVea (ten); Harry Carney (bar); Lady Will Carr (p); Ralph Hamilton (g); Red Callender (bs); Hal 'Doc' West (d)

Hollywood - c. August, 1946

*Fat and forty :: I surrender dear :: I got it bad and that ain't good :: How long :: S'posin' :: Don't take your love from me*

BILLIE HOLIDAY WITH THE TINY GRIMES SEXTET:

Billie Holiday (vcl) acc Heywood Henry (ten); Bobby Tucker (p); Tiny Grimes (g); unknown bs; d

New York City - c. April, 1951

WOR1681 *Be fair to me*

WOR1682 *Rocky mountain blues*

WOR1683 *Blue turning grey over you*

WOR1684 *Detour ahead*

Sunset SLS50013E (17/6d.)

TO THE best of my knowledge the six Al

Hibbler titles make their first appearance in

Britain with the release of this LP; the four Billie Holiday tracks came out here some time ago as Vogue EPV1128. When Hibbler was the regular Ducal vocalist he did little to impress me. Since he left the band some of his successors have been so awful that I wished Al was back. In retrospect he sang acceptably, not always innocent of histrionics of course, but not bad at all. He is in good form on these six tracks but I must confess that it is the band which interests me more. It is usual to date this session as being in 1945 but I have examined the evidence of the discographies and suggest August, 1946. Firstly the session took place in Los Angeles (hence the presence of the Hawkins-like McVoutie and the Callender-West team). Secondly Shorty Baker is in the band; thirdly Russ Procope is on alto. These six titles were released originally in an album with the individual Aladdin catalogue numbers 154, 155 and 156, *Blues Records 1943 - 1966* shows that an Amos Milburn 78 with the Aladdin catalogue number 159 was recorded on September 12, 1946 in Los Angeles. Shorty Baker was not in the Ellington band in 1945 but he was a member of the Ducal brass from July to September, 1946 (a period when the Ellington band happened to be on the west coast). Procope did not join the band as a regular member until the summer of 1946 (he played a few dates with the band in October, 1945, but the Duke was in New York at the time). A pianist named Lady Will Carr plays on a 1957 session by the Harper-Brinson band incidentally. On the evidence of these Hibbler tracks it is not Ellington.

The Billie tracks are variable in quality. When the Vogue EP came out I found all but one of the tracks well below the standard I felt I had a right to expect but, on re-hearing the titles, my judgement has mellowed. The two blues—*Be fair to me* and *Rocky mountain* sound much better than I remember, while *Detour ahead* is every bit as good, perhaps even better, than I recall.

This fine tune was composed by Herb Ellis, Lou Carter and Johnny Frigo (who used to call themselves the Soft Winds when they worked together as a trio). It is interesting to note that Mary Ann McCall, frequently accused of copying Billie, recorded this song (with the Herman band) two years before and, if I had to choose between the two versions, I would be hard put to make a decision. The LP plays for twenty-eight and a half minutes and sleeve note writer Leonard Feather is guilty of not doing his homework. He fails to list the personnel for the sessions which, in the case of the Hibbler tracks, is inexcusable as the details appeared in *New Hot Discography — 1948, Jazz Directory* (volume Four) and Benny Aasland's *Waxworks Of Duke Ellington*.

ALUN MORGAN

### HOT PIANOS 1926-1940

JELLY ROLL MORTON'S NEW ORLEANS JAZZMEN:

Sidney deParis (tpt); Fred Robinson (tbn); Albert Nicholas (clt); Happy Cauldwell (ten); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Lawrence Lucie (g); Wellman Braud (bs); Zutty Singleton (d)

New York City - September 29, 1939

041360-1 *Climax rag*

Washington, D.C. - December 1, 1938

JELLY ROLL MORTON (p)

MLB-145 *Finger buster*

MLB-146 *Creepy feeling*

MLB-149 *Honky tonk music*

CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LOWER BASIN STREET:

Henry Levine (tpt); Jack Epstein (tbn); Alfie Evans (clt); Rudolph Adler (ten); Jelly Roll Morton (p); Tony Colucca (g); Harry Patent (bs); Nat Levine (d)

Radio Broadcast, New York City - July 14, 1940

*Winin' boy blues*

MONTANA TAYLOR (p) with THE JAZZBO BOYS (vcl duet)

Chicago - April 22, 1929

C-3350 *Whoop and holler stomp*

C-3551 *Hayride stomp*

CAROLINE JOHNSON (vcl) acc Thomas 'Fats' Waller (p)

New York City - c. May 1, 1926

X-99-B *Ain't got nobody to grind my coffee*

X-100 *Mama's losin' a mighty good chance*

MAUDE MILLS (vcl) acc Thomas 'Fats' Waller (p)

New York City - c. May 1927.

*Anything that happens just pleases me*

*My old daddy's got a brand new way to love*

ALBERTA HUNTER (vcl) acc Thomas 'Fats' Waller (pipe organ)

Camden, N.J. - May 20, 1927

38048-2 *I'm goin' to see my Ma*

Chicago - May 1, 1929

COW COW DAVENPORT (p, talking-1)

C-3418 *Back in the alley*

C-3419 *Mootch piddle-1*

Historical M HLP-29 (55/-)

THE COMPILATION of most Historical LPs

leaves much to be desired, though there are ex-

ceptions to anthologies such as this, built around a valid theme, 'Territory Bands' being an example. I shall be reviewing a number of Historical issues in coming months and to avoid repetition will say now that I shall concern myself primarily with the music to be heard, leaving the question of price and duplication (the Mills tracks are on a VJM EP, the 1938 Morton tracks on a recent Gaps LP) to the individual decision of prospective buyers. Anthology LPs of this nature will be purchased or not purely on their value to readers in filling gaps in their collection, though very occasionally there may be one that can be recommended as exceptional in illustrating of a particular area of jazz.

The rare take of *Climax* is in no ways inferior to the generally issued take 2, having particularly fine contributions from Nicholas and Morton. *Finger* is a flashy virtuoso piece of the sort that the 'Professors' must have used to dazzle their opponents, in contrast to the melodic *Creepy*, a delightful solo that makes use of the 'Spanish tinge' and highlights Morton's wonderful sense of timing. Despite the use of a modified boogie bass and the more assertive nature of *Honky tonk*, the performance is permeated by a curiously wistful quality. *Winin' boy* has a fine solo by Morton, very different to his other versions, but declines into routine playing by the ensemble. The superb Montana Taylor would have benefitted if the Jazzbo Boys had remained at home, for he plays beautifully on both tracks, *Hayride* being a *Pinetop's boogie woogie* variant. However, the Jazzbo Boys's scat singing and patter is entertaining enough.

On side two, Johnson and Mills are routine vaudeville singers, but Waller solos agreeably on all titles, to best advantage on the Mills tracks. His pipe organ solo on *I'm goin'* is charming and a great deal better developed than much of his later work, while Miss Hunter's light voice is rather apt in this setting. *Back* is a close relation of *Cow cow blues* and is a powerful, stomping boogie solo,

Davenport's bass figures being impressive. The final track, *Mootch*, has Davenport talking all the way through over his firm boogie playing which, at one point, introduces a phrase from *Bucket's got a hole in it*. Playing time is 43 minutes, recording is dependent on the originals used for taping but is clear. ALBERT McCARTHY

## BOBBY HUTCHERSON

### TOTAL ECLIPSE:

Harold Land (ten, fl); Chick Corea (p); Reggie Johnson (bs); Joe Chambers (d); Bobby Hutcherson (vib)

New York City - July 8, 1968

*Herzog :: Total eclipse :: Matrix :: Same shame :: Pompeian*  
Blue Note BST84291 (47/5d.)

IF THE 40 minutes and 24 seconds of music here lack the overall impact of Hutcherson's earlier collections (*Dialogue*, see J.M. January 1966, *Components*, J.M. April '68 and *Happenings*, December '67), it seems to be due to the absence of a comparable exploratory purpose. That would not be a weakness if this talented vibraharpist—easily the most creative to appear since Milt Jackson's great days in the 'fifties—could be said to have reached a specific destination. At one time we thought we knew where he was going, for he said that he was after "A fusion of free counterpoint and complex rhythm patterns that will create a core around which each part will rotate". But, while this disc, like its predecessors, ought to give the Gary Burton fans a lot to ponder, there is little evidence here of Hutcherson's holding to any such well defined aims.

In fact it starts badly, with Corea sounding glib, sleek and empty on *Herzog*; this must have been catching, for the leader plays that way too, and only Land's statements have much substance. No part of this LP bears the full impress of the tenorist's distinctive musical personality yet he is better still on *Total eclipse*, where the carefully paced, subtly shifting accompaniment is more characteristic of a Hutcherson date. The vibraharp solo is an improvement also, its lines nicely varied in length, rarely starting or stopping just where expected, and full of unlikely turnings and cogent detail. Corea is best on this piece too, showing not much originality but some harmonic refinement and a good sense of aptly changing textures. *Matrix* presents the same processes speeded up, and the demands of a faster tempo iron out some of Hutcherson's originality, all of Corea's.

*Same shame* is the longest track and suffers from overmuch rhapsodic licence: I hoped repeated hearings would reveal some inner nerve and sinew but they haven't, so far. *Pompeian* is softer still, deliquescing into a collective improvisation where colour and texture quickly get the upper hand of musical thought and feeling. This is an obvious blind alley—the mere playing with sounds, that is—of certain avenues the new jazz is exploring, as I've said before, and if everyone doodles long enough, as here, it begins to sound like all the world's five-finger exercises played at once. In both these performances Hutcherson's sense of form and his feeling for the place of detail within that form would seem to have deserted him—as they never did in, say, the more daring *Les Noirs marchent* from the *Dialogue* release. Even so, *Pompeian* should please the gentleman who, about ten years ago, closed a dismissive M.J.Q. review with the phrase "And there are lots of little bells", for the sleeve note openly admits the vibraharpist turns to such resources on this track. So little bells are back, men, but hear this record for it does have good moments, even if there is nothing to set beside *Aquarian moon* from *Happenings*, *West 22nd Street* from *Components* or *Dialogue* from *Dialogue*.

MAX HARRISON

## ROLAND KIRK

### GIFTS AND MESSAGES:

Roland Kirk (ten, etc.); Horace Parlan (p); Michael Fleming (bs); Steve Ellington (d)

New York City - 1964

*The things I love :: Petite fleur :: Hip chops :: Gifts and messages :: Vertigo Ro :: March on, Swan Lake :: Tears sent by you :: Where does the blame lie? :: Blues for C & T*  
Mercury SMWL21020 (28/7d.)

## NOW PLEASE DON'T YOU CRY, BEAUTIFUL EDITH:

Lonne Smith (p); Ronald Boykins (bs); Grady Tate (d) replace Parlan, Fleming and Ellington

Englewood Cliffs, N.J. - 1967

*Blue Rol :: Alfie :: Why don't they know? :: Silverlization :: Fallout :: Now please don't you cry, beautiful Edith :: Stompin' grounds :: It's a grand night for swinging*

Verve SVLP (Ⓜ VLP) 9193 (37/5d.)

### THE INFLATED TEAR:

Ron Burton (p); Steve Novosel (bs); Jimmy Hopps (d); replace Smith, Boykins and Tate

New York City - 1968

*The black and crazy blues :: A laugh for Rory :: Many blessings :: Fingers in the wind :: The inflated tear :: Creole love call :: A handful of fives :: Fly by night-1 :: Lovellevelliloqui*  
1-add Dick Griffith (tbn)

Atlantic 588 112 (37/6d.)

UNLIKE most of his generation, Roland Kirk is an entertainer (perhaps as a result of being blind?) and, like many older jazzmen, he sometimes seems more serious about entertaining than about displaying his musical talents. On the earliest of these LPs, he introduces briefly a music-box which plays the *Scene* from "Swan Lake" (coincidentally, *The things I love* is a pop-song also based on Tchaikovsky, this time the *Souvenir d'un lieu cher*) and, on the most recent album, he demonstrates a home-made gadget called the flexaphone which sounds rather like variable-pitch water-glasses. Maybe it was this side of his personality which Steve Voce referred to when claiming that each new record discloses some further development of Kirk's art. Musically, he may not previously have attained the almost stark romanticism of *The black and crazy blues*, but this is very close to the rather Ellingtonian *Blue Rol*, and both are forecast in *Gifts and messages* (which happens to share its opening phrase with the well-known setting of A.A. Milne's *How sweet to be a cloud!*). And perhaps his 3-note chords have not sounded quite as mock-menacing as on *The inflated tear*. But is this really "development"? Or is it a case of doing the same thing better? Most jazzmen so far have been content to do their thing better (or worse) as the years go by, while Miles and Coltrane and Hawk and the Duke are about the only ones who have "developed" to any notable degree.

There is, then, considerable similarity between these three LPs and indeed a certain sameness, by comparison with the three appearances of Kirk's that I saw during February and March (I gather that he played a different programme every night on the Clarke-Boland concert tour). Charles Fox, in his uncredited sleeve-note to "Gifts", says "This LP gives a fairly good idea of the range that Roland Kirk offers in one of his live performances", but of the excitement and, above all, the spontaneity there is no trace anywhere here. And the playing-times (34, 32 and 37 minutes respectively, giving an overall average of just under 3 mins. 57.7 secs. per track) clearly explain why the often catchy originals make more impact than the once-around-the-changes solos. The end result is uncomfortably close to the average Dave Brubeck set, and the habitual use of uninteresting rhythm-sections recalls all those useless Sonny Stitt quartet LPs (I am surprised Kirk doesn't do a Jesse Fuller and accompany himself on hi-hat and maybe the footpedals of an organ!). That this approach to album-making is probably imposed on Kirk is shown by his revealing comment on a jazz-influenced pop-record (*Melody Maker*, April 5):- "They won't let me make a record like that . . . We can do the same things, but with my name on it the rock stations wouldn't play it". So here we have three stereotyped "jazz" LPs, of which "Inflated Tear" has a slight edge over the others, and, of course, on this one the average track-length soars up to 4mins.

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

## LEE KONITZ

### INSIDE HI FI:

Lee Konitz (alt-1, ten-2); Billy Bauer (g); Arnold Fishkin (bs); Dick Scott (d)

New York City - October 21 and 22, 1956

*Everything happens to me-1 :: Sweet and lovely-1 :: Cork 'n'*

*bib-1 :: Kary's trance-1, 2*

Sal Mosca (p); Peter Ind (bs) replace Bauer and Fishkin  
New York City - September 26 and October 5,  
1956

*All of me-2 :: Star eyes-2 :: Nesuhi's instant-2 :: Indiana-2*

Atlantic Special 590 027 (25/-)

THE ABOVE was originally issued on London  
LTZ-K15092 in 1957, but not then reviewed  
by J.M. These 40 minutes and 28 seconds of music now sound  
more central to jazz expression, yet also more acutely personal,  
than they did twelve years ago, and while the moral of that ought  
to be spelt out, again, in words of one syllable, I'll let it pass on  
this occasion. So far as I am aware, these titles mark the first  
time Konitz played tenor in a recording studio, but like Parker,  
and unlike Coleman, his resorting to the heavier instrument told  
us nothing fresh about him. On *Kary's trance*, where he shifts  
down from alto to tenor, the continuity of feeling is notable, yet  
elsewhere his unfamiliarity with the latter sometimes prompts him  
to less characteristic phrase-endings than usual. Konitz's tenor  
sound is rougher, more sour, than that highly individual alto  
tone, but seems marked by the same basically probing emphasis,  
despite the lines he produces on it being as a rule less highly  
wrought. Of course, listening to him on tenor does point up his  
links with Lester Young, but anybody with half a musical ear  
should be able to detect them in any case, and frankly it is more  
rewarding to consider these performances in the light of Konitz's  
development as a whole.

As Jack Cooke wrote in the April issue when reviewing that ex-  
pensive Milestone LP of duets, there has never been any doubt of  
the altoist's strength of character, and comparing *Inside Hi Fi*  
with that 1967 record shows his work has over the years maintained  
an unspectacular yet steady evolution despite almost complete  
public indifference. Though when he made *Inside Hi Fi* Konitz's  
sense of construction—one of his greatest virtues—still related to  
that of his teacher Lennie Tristano, he had, not so long before,  
grown more concerned with his own kind of emotional projection  
via tonal variety and swing. The 1954 *Skylark* had been an indi-  
cator of the way he was moving, and readers will find it instruc-  
tive also to compare the two 12-bars here, *Cork 'n' bib* and  
*Nesuhi's instant*, with another blues, *Don't squawk*, taped in '55  
with Warne Marsh. *Nesuhi's instant* is the most impressive, I think,  
for the control Konitz demonstrates by increasing tension evenly  
over six choruses, but *All of me's* immediate, loping urgency and  
the tenderness of *Everything happens* are equally valuable proofs  
of his extended emotional range.

There are instances, too, of Konitz's superior craftsmanship, such  
as the involuted final phrase of *Indiana*, which makes a formal  
recapitulation of that banal melody unneedful and exemplifies a  
sort of compression that one cannot help wishing was more com-  
mon in jazz. This, indeed, is one of several procedures he might  
have taken further, and while his continuing development is a  
fact, it does not necessarily follow the subsequent changes have  
all been for the best, or that he might not have taken a more  
fruitful path. Stronger admirers than I would claim, to be sure,  
that Konitz's very personal manner has never been weakened by  
his fuller alignment with convention, yet, so far as one can judge  
from such records as have appeared of recent years, I feel he has  
made compromises with jazz orthodoxy which are not advanta-  
geous. Perhaps I am guilty of that most tedious of critical sins,  
assessing one body of music by the standards of another, but if  
his earliest recorded work still seems to me overly hermetic and if  
recent offerings such as the Milestone duets are less of a concen-  
trated and personal distillation than I had hoped, this is in effect  
an endorsement of 'middle period' Konitz. And that is a recom-  
mendation for this LP.

MAX HARRISON

## GEORGE LEWIS

GEORGE LEWIS 1944-1945:

George Lewis (clt); Lawrence Marrero (bj); Alcide Pavageau (bs)  
New Orleans - July 29, 1944

95 *Burgundy Street blues*

Kid Howard (tpt); Jim Robinson (tbn); George Lewis (clt);  
Lawrence Marrero (bj); Chester Zardis (bs); Edgar Mosley (d)

New Orleans - July 1944

112 *Careless love*

Kid Shots Madison (tpt); Alcide Pavageau (bs); Baby Dodds (d) re-  
place Howard, Zardis and Mosley

New Orleans - August 5, 1944

703 *High society*

omit Madison

same date

712 *San Jacinto blues No. 1*

713 *Ice cream*

George Lewis (clt); Lawrence Marrero (bj); Ricard Alexis (bs)

New Orleans - May 17, 1945

862 *Hindustan*

Bunk Johnson (tpt); Jim Robinson (tbn); George Lewis (clt);

Lawrence Marrero (bj); Alcide Pavageau (bs); Baby Dodds (d)

same date

868 *Lonesome road*

George Lewis (clt); Lawrence Marrero (bj); Alcide Pavageau (bs)

New Orleans - May 21, 1945

912 *Over the waves*

916 *New Orleans hula*

917 *This love of mine*

918 *St. Philip Street breakdown*

Storyville @ 670 201 (37/6d.)

FROM THE viewpoint of his final reputation,  
Lewis probably made too many records in his  
latter years. For much of the time he seemed, like Woody Her-  
man, to be quite vainly trying to recreate an earlier, increasingly  
distant, success. Those who have formed an unfavourable opinion  
of him based on his more recent work should make a special  
point of hearing the above LP, and other recordings from the  
same period, because, while he played the same style later, his  
output was then far more consistent in quality and much better  
integrated in terms of expression and technique. Perhaps those  
able to respond only to the more superficial levels of jazz—e.g.  
the dixieland bowdlerisation of this idiom—will always misunder-  
stand such music, believing it to be merely crude, yet Lewis is less  
simple than might at first appear, his choice of intervals, for  
example, often being quite unexpected on performances like the  
above.

As I have said before (J.M. January 1963 and December '67), in  
its organisation his playing is based on arpeggios, but rarely does  
he just run up and down the chords like his imitators. Instead, he  
is, in melodic terms, always going somewhere, his runs being ex-  
tended motivically and never descending to mere joins between  
the trumpet phrases during full ensembles. In *St. Philip Street  
breakdown* (a variant on the Herman *Chips boogie woogie* crossed  
with Goodman's *Gone with what wind?!*) his ideas flow across the  
chorus divisions, and his phrases' irregular lengths should be noted.  
The continuity is important, and from it comes the rhythmic  
interest of Lewis's work. On *Ice cream*, where the clarinet line  
almost throughout is in unflagging quavers, there is considerable  
variety to his placement of accents, a surprising number of them,  
considering the fast tempo, coming between the beats, at the same  
time they closely relate to Dodd's part and are grouped in tellingly  
contrasted patterns which are the key to Lewis's fine sense of  
swing. Further, his is essentially a blues style, no small point if his  
playing be compared with that of older clarinetists such as Nelson  
or Picou, who were only marginally affected by the blues. (This is  
apparent if one contrasts Lewis and Picou even on something like  
the traditional *High society* chorus.) The high incidence of blued  
notes, on which the accents often fall, accounts, too, for much of  
the intensity of his improvising, and *Burgundy Street* is, of course,  
a justly celebrated instance of this side of his music, being a poi-  
gnant set of well contrasted yet firmly linked variations. More  
complex is the already mentioned *Ice cream*, a masterpiece of its  
kind, an involved sequence of contrapuntal variations where in  
the two horns exchange roles with what at first is disconcerting  
frequency, their normal tasks being modified by the absence of a  
trumpet, which leads Robinson in particular to abandon the usual  
trombone bass part. *San Jacinto* is very different but nearly as  
good, its appeal being in its long, searing melodies; this, indeed,  
ranks with *Burgundy Street* as an example of Lewis's blues playing.

The opposite side of the coin is the rather excessive sweetness of *This love* and the 3/4 beginning to *Over the waves*. Here seems to be a recurring element in New Orleans jazz which is hard to account for, and in both cases Lewis stays close to the melody, like Bechet on *Indian summer*.

The full band tracks are mixed. *Careless love* has its moments, but *High society* is crippled by tensely muddled ensembles. *Lonesome road* could hardly be more different, for the complex lucidity of its horn lines is beautifully sustained over the rhythm section's light yet deeply swinging pulse; in fact as a piece of collective improvisation it is almost as good as *827 blues* or *All the whores*. Even the sleeve's messy layout of discographical misinformation (wrong dates, etc.) is compensated for by a wonderful 'period' sleeve note all about "a youthful vitality almost unrivalled among the nation's dance bands", and other phenomena as worthy of applause as the music itself.

MAX HARRISON

## LOW PAID PIANO BLUES AND BOOGIE- WOOGIE

SYLVESTER PALMER (vcl, p)

Chicago - November 15, 1929

403306-A *Mean blues*

402207-A *Lonesome man blues*

WILL EZELL (p)

Chicago - c. August, 1928

20823 *Old mill blues*

Chicago - c. February 1929

21143-1 *Barrel house woman*

CRIPPLE CLARENCE LOFTON (vcl, p); Big Bill Broonzy (g-1);

unknown (wbd-2)

Chicago - April 2, 1935

C-947-B *Strut that thing -2*

C-948-A *Monkey man blues -1*

Chicago - July 18, 1935

C-1075-A *You've done tore your playhouse down -1*

RED NELSON (vcl); Cripple Clarence Lofton (p)

Chicago - February 4, 1936

90598- *Streamline train*

LEE BROWN (vcl, p)

New York City - August 3, 1937

62489-A *Carpenter man blues*

62490-A *Little girl, little girl*

WALTER DAVIS (vcl, p); prob. Henry Townsend (g-1)

Aurora, Ill. - December 19, 1938

030830-1 *You don't know right from wrong -1*

030832-1 *Smoky mountain*

THE HONEY DRIPPER (ROOSEVELT SYKES) (vcl, p); unknown (d)

Chicago, September 13, 1939

91751-B *New mistake in life*

91752-A *We will never make the grade*

ST LOUIS JIMMY (Jimmy Oden) (vcl); Roosevelt Sykes (p);

Big Bill Broonzy (g); Alfred Elkins (imit. bs)

Chicago - March 25, 1942

074164-1 *Soon forget you*

974165-1 *Can't stand your evil ways*

Confidential CLP 001 (35/-)

AN ODDLY titled collection, for there's little boogie-woogie here; moreover, there are a lot of

low down piano blues performances more deserving of reissue than Palmer's and Brown's pieces. A pleasant enough album, nevertheless, though the opening sentence of my "Classic Guitar Blues" review (this issue) applies here to. Chris Strachwitz reissued Lofton's *Brown skin girls* on Blues Classics BC-5; Confidential now offer us the rest of his 1935 recordings. *Strut* later became *I don't know*; *Monkey* and *Playhouse* are more conventional blues which are distinguished by Lofton's wry lyrics as much as his piano-playing, this being heard to greatest advantage, of course, on the celebrated *Streamline*. *Strut*'s spirited washboard accompaniment is surely by Washboard Sam. Broonzy plays superbly on the other Lofton cuts, and his electric-guitar work provides much of the interest on St. Louis Jimmy's two characteristic songs, where

Sykes fails to get very low down. On his own pair the Honey Dropper provides typically literate words; indeed, this LP shows quite well the verbal skill of the popular urban bluesman of the 'thirties. *New mistake* was a remake of an influential song (cp. John Lee Hooker's *Half a stranger*); Lee Brown's *Little girl* got around too, it seems, for it lies behind Blind Boy Fuller's *Night rambling woman*, among others. Brown's other piece is a pleasing sexual-metaphor blues with some vivid imagery.

Walter Davis can be a tedious artist, but this pair, in its quiet way, is lovely: his singing on *You don't know* is specially elegant. It is neat that Henry Townsend should be the probably accompanist, for he was a friend of Sylvester Palmer, and their mutual influence is shown clearly by Palmer's economic singing and playing. Ezell, too, creates a mood out of spare and relatively unornamented lines, and his performances give a better idea of the piano's potential in the idiom than most of the other tracks.

Another duplication warning: Ezell's *Barrel* is available elsewhere, and Lofton's *Monkey* is due on Yazoo L-1015. Transfer quality is adequate; Label fruitful in misspellings; sleeve (like that of "Classic Guitar Blues") a polythene-end-card slipcase, devoid of information. The two *Confidentials* ought to be available through specialist shops; the address of at least one supplier can be obtained from the Editor. Considering the relatively low price, collectors could do worse than follow this up; but really valuable blues piano albums remain remarkably thin on the ground.

TONY RUSSELL

## ROSCOE MITCHELL ART ENSEMBLE

CONGLIPTIOUS:

Roscoe Mitchell (alt)

Chicago - March 4, 1968

*Tkhke*

Lester Bowie (tpt, throat-clearing, talking, whistling) replaces Mitchell

same date

*Jazz death?*

Malachi Favors (bs, vcl) replaces Bowie

same date

*Tutankhamen*

Lester Bowie (tpt, fl h, steer hn, bs d); Roscoe Mitchell (sop, alt, bs, sax, fl, recorder); Robert Crowder (d)

Chicago - March 11, 1968

*Congliptious/Old-1*

1-unidentified throat-clearing, moaning, etc. on this track (Obtainable from Nessa Records, 5875 North Glenwood, Chicago, Illinois 60626, U.S.A.)

Nessa N2

AS THE sleeve remarks, form is a major challenge facing the new jazz, and while, as it adds, the

Roscoe Mitchell Art Ensemble's response to this problem may be "brilliant", their actual solutions, thus far, are not. With the partial exception of *Tutankhamen*, the unaccompanied items avoid constructing long lines while the ensemble performances are almost completely episodic: the moods shift and flicker but their implications are never followed through. There are ample ideas here which, if now rather familiar, still give rise to plenty of contrast. Unfortunately, this contrast is merely extreme—i.e. elementary—and is not used constructively. By this I do not mean form-building in a conventional way but in any way that is detectable to sustained, concentrated listening. In contrast, the deployment of established new thing executive resources—extreme vocalisation of tone, etc.—is strikingly confident. Yet, belatedly to echo Spike Hughes, the quickness of the band does not quite deceive the ear (unless it wishes to be), and there is not much individuality to the separate lines of *Congliptious/Old* so little collective personality emerges either. Both solo and ensemble tracks represent investigations of the media of a kind essential to new music—note how the seemingly random collage of, say, John Cage's *Radio music* was put to a more intensive use in the wittily surrealistic juxtapositions of *Aria*, or how the static, already-timeless qualities of his early *Music for wind instruments* led to the infinitely varied mosaics of pieces like *34' 46,776"*. But jazz, in too much of a hurry as usual, here explores in too elementary a way; one can tell the differences between fast and slow, loud and soft, delicate

and abrasive without them being spelt out so emphatically as here.

MAX HARRISON

## WES MONTGOMERY

### WILLOW WEEP FOR ME:

Wes Montgomery (g); Wynton Kelly (p); Paul Chambers (bs); Jimmy Cobb (d)

"Half Note", New York City - c. June 1965

*Willow weep for me-1 :: Impressions :: Portrait of Jennie-1 :: Surrey with the fringe on top :: Oh! you crazy moon-1 :: Four on six :: Misty-1*

1-unknown ensemble (4-5 brass, 2 reeds) added late 1968; Claus Ogerman (arr, cond)

Verve SVLP (M VLP) 9238 (37/5d.)

THE FIRST time someone had a posthumous accompaniment on record was around 1935, I

think, when Victor made some Caruso sides "compatible" by submerging the acoustically-recorded orchestra with an electrically-recorded one. Of course, it's rather different for Verve or Liberty to expand West Montgomery's group to three times its original size (or for French Barclay to augment Django Reinhardt's last session with, would you believe, five studio guitarists!!) But it's also very much the same as the process of bastardization which Montgomery's music had already been subjected to—especially when you consider that, in his last years, the orchestral backings were usually taped first for him to dub in the melody line when he had a spare moment. You could even say that these recent issues are far better than his commercial hits, because the companies have had to try and take the edge off some out-and-out jazz; and whereas Gerald Wilson (on Liberty's "Portrait of W.M.") partly succeeded by filling in the accompaniment so much as to make the solos seem more predictable than they in fact are, Claus Ogerman has used a rather halfhearted approach. Indeed, the very sparse and under-recorded embellishments on the slower tracks do little to enhance or detract from a good 41½ minutes of the kind Wes played in Europe during April 1965: *Four on six*, his original based on *Summertime* (a different performance from that on "Smokin' At The Half Note", under Wynton Kelly's name), and Coltrane's *Impressions* contain some of the guitarist's most exciting riff-style solos.

The only drawbacks are an excessive tape hiss on some tracks (and excessive applause, which seems to have been embellished as well) and the editing of the unembellished tracks. I am not being inconsistent in defending the added instruments and complaining about choruses being removed (I don't in fact disparage the principle of editing as such) but was it necessary on *Surrey* and *Four on six* to abbreviate the piano solos in quite such an obvious way? And were Wes's opening theme-statements on these two tracks so masterly that they had to be repeated, note for note, at the end of the number—and then faded out when the improvisation starts for the second time? And what is this ugly splice in the middle of the guitar solo on *Four on six*, which now sounds like two separate solos respectively 11 and 12 choruses long? I can understand that it was thought desirable to have as much Montgomery on the LP as possible, rather like the Parker "St. Nick's" and "52nd St." albums, but the results make one wonder whether the guitar vibrato on *Jennie* and *Moon* might not be posthumous too—it's amazing what you can do with 8-track tape...

BRIAN PRIESTLEY

## DANNY MOSS, JACK JACOBS AND FOURTEEN FOOT BAND

### THE GOOD LIFE:

Ted Ambrose (tpt, vcl-1); Mike Collier (tbn, ldr); Danny Moss (ten); Jack Jacobs (alt); Terry Whitney (p, arr), Alan Kennington (bs); Derek Middleton (d)

Haywards Heath, Sussex - October 23, 1968

*The good life-2 :: Special delivery stomp :: I want a little girl-1 :: I want to be happy-3 :: Blue Lou :: Squaty roo :: Stardust-2 :: You can depend on me-1 :: Shine-3 :: Black butterfly-4*  
-2 Ambrose, Collier and Jacobs not present on this track; -3 Ambrose, Collier and Moss not present on this track; -4 Ambrose and Jacobs not present on this track

77 M LEU 12/33 (39/5d.)

THE FOURTEEN Foot Band plays regularly at the 'Fox and Hounds', Haywards Heath. It is a highly efficient mainstream unit led by Collier—reticent in featuring himself on this LP—a Teagarden-influenced trombonist heard in a solo capacity only on *Black*. Ambrose is a strong toned trumpeter, good in the ensemble and capable as a soloist, his hoarse, gruff vocals being entertaining. The rhythm section provides a firm foundation, with pianist Whitney taking several neat, melodic solos.

Agreeable as the regular band might be, it is no disrespect to them to remark that the highspots of the record are provided by the two guests. Moss has for long been my favourite British tenor player and he has never been heard to better advantage on record than here. Of his two ballad features *Stardust* is the most imaginative, but he takes very fine solos on *I want a little girl*, *Blue Lou*, *Squaty* and *You can*, employing an attractive full tone in the swing era manner and showing great skill in varying his choruses by contrasting phrases and dynamic levels. That Moss plays so well is no surprise—on several occasions Budd Johnson, who worked with Moss, has told me how highly he rates his work—but he is matched by the virtually unknown Jacobs. The latter, a part-time musician through other professional commitments, is a fluent, technically assured improviser in a style that has hints of Tab Smith, Benny Carter and Pete Brown but is also distinctly his own. His features—*I want to be* and *Shine*—have delightful flowing solos and throughout he is outstanding.

This is a very good record for swing style collectors, well recorded and with a playing time of 39 minutes.

ALBERT MCCARTHY

## GERRY MULLIGAN

### MEETS PAUL DESMOND AND JOHNNY HODGES:

Paul Desmond (alt); Gerry Mulligan (bar); Joe Benjamin (bs); Dave Bailey (d)

New York City - August 1, 1957

21221 *Body and soul*

21222 *Blues in time*

21224 *Wintersong*

New York City - August 27, 1957

21323 *Fall out*

21324 *Line for Lyons*

21325 *Battle hymn of the republican*

21326 *Standstill*

Johnny Hodges (alt); Gerry Mulligan (bar); Claude Williamson (p); Buddy Clark (bs); Mel Lewis (d)

Los Angeles - July, 1960

*Bunny :: What's the rush :: Back seat :: What's it all about :: Eighteen carrots for Rabbit :: Shady side*

Verve M VSP 33/34 (37/5d.)

SORRY TO bore readers who have heard this before, but Mulligan is a remarkable musical catalyst: in sessions which involve his playing, he almost always brings out the best in his colleagues. The sides with Desmond are justly famous examples: the effete, chilly alto saxophonist, who had for years saved Brubeck's quartet from utter dreariness by weaving tinsel round his leader's clomping piano, unexpectedly proved to be a full-blooded jazzman. I hardly need to review these tracks in detail in these pages; I often play *Line for Lyons* as an example of what had become of Dixieland by the mid-'fifties, and superb it is. The rest of the tracks are up to this standard; hear Desmond play an up-dated Chicago shuffle in *Battle hymn of the republican*. Alun Morgan's sleeve note decodes the tune titles and reveals the standards beneath. Mulligan's effect on Hodges was less dramatic, in that, though Hodges played well, Mulligan himself was at times a little subdued. These are closer to ordinary mainstream sessions—the link with the ODJB is more remote—but the idiom is far from conventional. The great *Shady side* (for which, I believe, Hodges was responsible) is, as Alun Morgan points out, the most satisfying track of the session, but close to it comes *What's it all about* with two excellent blues choruses from Mulligan (but how dim to end with a fade out). *Carrot* provides an instance when Hodges, unusually animated, reduced Mulligan momentarily to musical speechlessness (this number

and *Line for Lyons* came out not long ago on VLP 9116.) Jepsen lists *Back seat* as *Back beat* which, from the drumming, seems the more plausible title. This is another excellent pair of records from VSP. And now, please turn to my review of the Peterson VSP and note my comments at its end, particularly if you have influence with Verve-VSP.

JOHN POSTGATE

#### LINE FOR LYONS:

Art Farmer (fl-h); Bob Brookmeyer (v-tbn); Gerry Mulligan (bar, p-1); Jim Hall (g); Bill Crow (bs); Dave Bailey (d)

New York City - July 1963

*Butterfly with hiccups-1 :: Old devil moon :: The ant hill :: Grazy day*

Farmer and Hall out

New York City - June 25, 1964

*You'd be so nice to come home to :: Theme for Jobim-1 ::*

*Blues for Lynda-1 :: Line for Lyons*

Mercury SMWL 21025 (28/7d.)

MULLIGAN has made some impressive records in the past, but this isn't one of them. Brookmeyer has the best of the solo space; his work has an easygoing wit and his ideas are original and flow well. Farmer seems to contribute less, while Mulligan himself is reasonably up to his own standards when he's playing baritone but excruciatingly dull when he's playing piano. *Ant-hill* is the best of the sextet tracks, coming across with all the sparkle and deftness that Mulligan's music can possess when it's not being over-cool or two-beatish. Mulligan wrote all the material apart from the standards and it's surprisingly poor stuff on the whole, ranging from the dead dull lines of *Jobim* and *Lynda* to the watery novelty of *Butterfly*; but just to prove he used to do it better there's a quartet version of *Lyons*, a line that in the circumstances comes over with all the flow of a rediscovered masterpiece.

JACK COOKE

#### OSCAR PETERSON

##### OSCAR PETERSON WITH THE JAZZ GIANTS:

Coleman Hawkins (ten); Oscar Peterson (p); Herb Ellis (g); Ray Brown (bs); Alvin Stoller (d)

Hollywood - October 24, 1957

*I'll never be the same :: You're blase :: In a mellow tone :: My melancholy baby :: Somebody loves me :: I wished on the moon :: the world is waiting for the sunrise*

Sonny Stitt (alt, ten-1); Oscar Peterson (p); Ray Brown (bs)

Ed Thigpen (d)

Paris - May 18, 1959

50001 *I can't give you anything but love*

50002 *Au Privave* (listed in Jepsen as *Bird's tune*)

50003 *The Gypsy*

50004 *Moten's swing -1*

50005 *Blues for Pres, Sweets, Ben and all the other funky ones-1*

50006 *Easy does it -1*

50007 *I'll remember April*

50008 *Scrapple from The Apple*

Ben Webster (ten); Oscar Peterson (p); Ray Brown (bs); Ed Thigpen (d)

New York City - November 6, 1959

*The touch of your lips :: Bye bye Blackbird :: How deep is the ocean :: When your lover has gone :: In the wee small hours of the morning :: Sunday :: This can't be love*

Verve SVSP 31/32 (37/5d.)

THESE tracks first appeared under the names of Stitt (as CLP 1384), Webster (as CLP 1412) and Hawkins (part of CLP 1293), so it is a little misleading to re-issue them under Peterson's name, particularly since his groups do not emerge entirely creditably from the whole hootenanny. Peterson's best group is the one which accompanies Stitt; I think this is because he had recently replaced Ellis by Thigpen and the Trio was still enjoying the sensation of having a drummer. *Moten's swing* is beautifully integrated—notice, too the smooth passage by tenor and bass only—and Peterson's own solos are uncommonly well rounded. Stitt is at his best on tenor, he reminds me curiously of Jimmy Hamilton: a simple blues-based conception with a strong sense of swing and a 'lean' tone. This is so even on *Blues for etc.* where he

introduces other people's phrases such as Lester Young's pet upwards run or Sweets Edison's favourite jump from the sixth to the blue third. As with Hamilton, Stitt's *alter ego* takes over on his second instrument and, for me, it is a distinctly duller *ego*. All the tunes are 'hallowed' by Charlie Parker and, despite the Trio's spirited tinkling, Stitt's alto playing is — I hate to be driven to this old cliché — just mechanical. *The gypsy* is almost too fulsome to be true; the rest is a stringing together of familiar Parkerisms. Perhaps they were less familiar ten years ago but now they pall rapidly. Hawkins, however, is lovely, despite the fact that Peterson's Trio augmented with Stoller, is much less sparkling. The best one can say for their efforts is that they are adequate; happily Hawkins is on such brilliant form that it does not matter. I find it difficult to select the best tracks; I think *Somebody loves you* has the edge on *I'll never be the same*. But one yearns for a touch of the spirit the Trio showed behind Stitt — on *In a mellow tone* Hawkins is momentarily afflicted by a reed squeak and, after a fractional pause, blows an angry rasp which should have elicited a spark from any rhythm section. But Peterson's lot plod on, chunk, chunk, chunk . . . I wonder if any of them even smiled? But the tracks are worth it for Bean; 1957-8 were good vintage years for Bean and he plays in the vein of *Bird of prey blues*, for those who know that great marathon.

Webster's tracks, it must be admitted, suffer somewhat in comparison. Even a decade ago he had a tendency to coast, to take the easy way, so that one rarely had the feeling, as one does with Hawkins at his best, that this need never end. On the other hand, Peterson's trio is on something like the form it showed with Stitt, and the boost they give to Webster lifts this record into something approaching Big Ben's best. Frequently his basically cumbrous melodic lines seem to float over the tight, springy rhythm. *This can't be love* and *Bye bye blackbird* must, indeed, be among Ben's best recordings (*Bye bye blackbird* appeared recently on VLP 9100). *Sunday* gives him a chance to roar and rasp a bit; *When your lover has gone* is the romantic one, but it can at least be mentioned in the same breath as the Tatum-Webster sessions. In summary, this is a very good double issue, despite the imperfections I have mentioned, for those who do not have the originals.

And now may I propose to Verve a sure-fire pair to issue in the VSP series? Lester Young's 'Jazz Giants 1956' (33CX10054) and 'Pres and Teddy' (CLP 1302) have been inaccessible for far too long. They would make a perfect VSP pair (with perhaps the mysterious *Pres returns* added?) and would allow a new generation of jazz lovers to hear that brief late-flowering, in the winter of 1956, of Lester Young's genius.

JOHN POSTGATE

#### 1968 MEMPHIS COUNTRY BLUES FESTIVAL

NATHAN BEAUREGARD (vcl, g)

Municipal Shell, Overton Park, Memphis, Tenn.

- July 20, 1968

*Highway 61 :: Kid gal blues*

BUKKA WHITE (vcl, g); Jim Crosthwait (wbd)

same date

*Hello central, give me 49 :: Baby, please don't go :: My mother died*

FURRY LEWIS (vcl, g)

same date

*Furry's blues*

REV. ROBERT WILKINS (vcl, g); Douglas Wilkins (vcl, cymbals, tamb); John Wilkins (bs-g)

same date

*In Heaven, sitting down :: What do you think about Jesus?*

JOE CALLICOTT (vcl, g)

same date

*You don't know my mind :: Great long ways from home*

Blue Horizon M 7-63210 (37/6d.)

THE STANDARD of musicianship on this record is not particularly high, but it's a captivating set all the same. Mike Vernon of Blue Horizon supervised the recording of this, the third festival presented by the Memphis Country Blues Society, and he included — rightly, it seems to me — some of the introductions, applause and so forth; it would have been criminal to delete Furry Lewis's hilarious patter and Joe

Callicott's rather moving embarrassment at finding himself up on the stage. For me, the mood is set right at the beginning, by M.C. Jim Crosthwait's Tennessee accent. He's introducing Nathan Beauregard, an artist reputedly 102 years old; subtract thirty years if you will, but here nevertheless is a ridiculously impressive musician, in almost complete command of a fine, rolling guitar style and a mordant voice. Think of Fred McDowell playing without bottleneck and pitching his voice rather higher, and you are not too far away.

Beauregard is new to almost all of us; the rest are more or less familiar. And familiarity with Bukka White, I am afraid, is breeding in me something approaching irritation, for the power of his singing and playing doesn't compensate for its crudity, particularly on a number like *Baby, please don't go*, which almost every other singer I can think of performs with greater finesse. How refreshing it is to listen, after that, to the Reverend Robert Wilkins's lovely renderings of two traditional hymns, supported by his sons; John Wilkins's throbbing bass-guitar lays down a really invigorating beat.

Furry Lewis, I'm sure, could entertain an audience playing tubular bells; though his guitar was terribly out-of-tune, the vim and good humour of his singing obviously got across to the Memphis crowd, and every bit of it comes over on record. Joe Callicott, less of an extravert, captures the hearer with more difficulty, and no doubt, for English enthusiasts, he carries too the burden of his 'prewar' reputation. He has lost much flexibility, both vocal and instrumental, over the years, and I can see many listeners being disappointed, but I think his strongly percussive playing and hoarse singing may grow on them as it has on me. As a collection of separate performances, very uneven, as a record of a worthwhile concert, entertaining and not infrequently very poignant.

TONY RUSSELL

## JOE TURNER

### STRIDE BY STRIDE:

Joe Turner (p, vc-1)

Cafe Africana, Zurich - December 6, 1960

*Song of the vagabonds :: Willow tree :: Body and soul :: I'm gonna move to the outskirts of town-1 :: I didn't know what time it was :: Harry Numa :: St. Louis blues :: Yesterdays :: That Sunday gal of mine-1 :: Tea for two :: Song of Hungary :: These foolish things*

77 M LEU 12/32 (39/5d.)

THIS IS an astonishingly good LP, far superior to anything Turner has previously recorded. His singing on two tracks is pleasant if undistinguished, but such performances are clearly a means of varying his routine for a night club audience, and the worth of the LP lies in the solos. Turner is unmistakably a part of the Harlem stride school. There are passages in the solos that recall Waller, Tatum, James J. Johnson, even Monk, but they are less imitations than the use of devices that are the common property of this group of performers. He is, above all, a technically impressive pianist, the Tatum-like runs on *Yesterdays* and *Tea* being beautifully executed. An ability to embellish the melody in a fresh manner is generally at the heart of the stride style, rather than harmonic exploration, and Turner proves himself to be a master of this on titles such as the delightful *Willow tree*, *Harry Numa* and *St. Louis blues*. On a few tracks - *I didn't know* and *Body and soul* - the theme is fragmented rather more than is usual, and in Johnny Simmen's long and interesting sleeve note the clue to this approach is contained when Turner is quoted on other pianists and mentions Monk, about whom he says: "It has been said he created bop. I jammed with him for years and I have the records. Any resemblance between Monk's playing and bop is to me purely a coincidence."

The stomp performances have considerable verve and swing, for Turner has an extremely powerful left hand and his bass patterns are forceful, but it is the ballad numbers that bring out his considerable melodic gifts - on *I didn't know* his solo is also harmonically interesting. Turner is a pianist whose past records have hardly done him justice - in this instance he finally proves to be an artist of considerable stature. With a playing time of 40 minutes and good recording, this is an LP that is unreservedly recommended

ALBERT MCCARTHY

# COUNT BASIE AT WAKEFIELD



DURING the *Jazz Expo '68* series at the Wakefield Theatre Club the session by the Count Basie Orchestra had been one of the highlights. Basie's return to this venue for the opening of his 1969 British tour was therefore anticipated with a good deal of interest. In the event the music heard during the band's two performances on April 18th did not quite attain the 1968 standard, but was nonetheless full of good and swinging things. The band had flown in from the States that morning and then had to fly from London to Yorkshire; this probably accounted for the lack of the bite and urgency of their best playing. But even the Basie ensemble a fraction below its peak is worth going a long way to hear. It was good to see the club packed for both shows.

The core of the Basie band is its rhythm section and at the very centre of the music is the Count himself - his piano punctuations are as brief, pithy and supremely pertinent as they have been all these years. His piano solo on the blues was full of his own brand of understatement and swing. In Norman Keenan and Harold Jones he has two musicians who understand the requirements of Basie jazz perfectly and lay down a loose kind of rhythm which allows the band to relax and swing to great effect. Indeed Jones is the finest band drummer to have emerged for some years. The other member of the rhythm team, Freddie Greene, played just as he has been doing for thirty years and more - superbly!

The Count and that remarkable tenor player 'Lockjaw' Davis apart, there are no really outstanding soloists in the current Basie band. But there are many who provide satisfactory choruses by any standard than that which demands instant genius the moment a jazzman launches into a solo. Eric Dixon was heard to good effect on flute, Bobby Plater had one driving blues based solo, and Marshall Royal obliged with his usual ballad feature. 'Lockjaw' had two extended solos, fiery and full of both humour and character. Al Aarons and Sonny Cohn produced trumpet solos of more than mere competence, Richard Boone was heard on trombone and in nonsense singing and Grover Mitchell has a new showcase on *Do nothin' 'til you hear from me*. The playing of the sections was of the usual quality, with surging, mellow saxophones, a really big sound from the four piece trombone section and stinging, accurate trumpets. Gene Goe's work on lead trumpet was not the least of the evening's pleasures. Several of Sammy Nestico's scores were heard and again they sounded ideal for the Basie band. At the Wakefield Club - a near ideal setting for a big band - the Basie Orchestra were heard in their own right, while for much of the 1969 tour they appear with Tony Bennett. If it is a commercial necessity for jazz groups to appear with pop stars I suppose one should be philosophical about it, for the jazz scene in Britain is not currently a very healthy one. Better Basie and Bennett than no Basie then, but best of all Basie without trimmings. Which is what we got at Wakefield. Many enthusiasts travelled miles to catch the band alone and they had only one grumble - the shortness of the sessions, especially the first. No doubt the band were tired after travelling. But surely things could be arranged to avoid playing so soon after flying in? The Count Basie Orchestra is one of the few jazz attractions which can still guarantee a full house. Yet in the long run Basie's music, like everyone else's, depends on the good will of the audience. A first house appearance of less than 45 minutes is unfortunate in the short term and foolish indeed in the long view - no matter who is responsible.

EDDIE LAMBERT

## A NEW LP



Danny Thompson (Bass)

Tony Carr (Percussion)

Harold McNair (Flute, alto and tenor sax)

John Cameron (Piano)

## OFF CENTRE \* THE JOHN CAMERON QUARTET

### Side One

OFF CENTRE, the title track, is based in thematic and solo content on the flattened 10th chord and the diminished 5th interval. Solos by Harold McNair on alto saxophone and John Cameron on piano are followed by a 'free' drum solo by Tony Carr.

GO AWAY, COME BACK ANOTHER DAY, an autobiographical ballad based on a poem by Elizabeth I, showcases the flute of Harold McNair. DAFINA QUERIDA: 'Growl' flute, various Latin instruments and the inside of the piano act as a shifting, restless backdrop to Danny Thompson's almost guitar-like bass, which states the theme and also takes the majority of the solo space on this Danny's debut as a composer.

### Side Two

OMAH CHEYENNE, musically the most ambitious track on the album, is based on a 12 note row of D E $\flat$  A E $\sharp$  B B $\flat$  F D $\flat$  A $\flat$  G G $\flat$  C. After the theme statement in 3/4 and 4/4, Harold solos on tenor on a polytonal sequence in D minor based on the row in 4/4. When this has reached its climax in a return to the original 3/4 there follows a rhythmically, melodically contrapuntal 'free' passage based solely on the tone row and its various inversions with piano and bass duetting against a constantly changing percussion background. Sudden, erratic interjections from the tenor herald the return to regular tonality and metre, and the final theme statement.

WENCESLAS SQUARE: This slow evocation of mood owes its particular quality to the use of moving tone clusters at once related and unrelated. There is no key as such but a general feeling of a tone centre of F.

SPLAT, a fairly conventional sequence, this features the fragmentary piano style of John Cameron, at times with the rhythm section, later as an unaccompanied voice and then in dialogue with the drumming of Tony Carr.

TROUBLEMAKER, a sort of Jazz meets Rock meets Blues meets Africa, features Harold McNair and John Cameron, with the whole group once again, through the wonders of modern science, adding a wall of percussion behind the blues based theme.

All titles composed  
and arranged by  
John Cameron



To be released on June 6th  
S SML 1044 M DML 1044

Deram Records Decca House Albert Embankment London SE1